

THE
ARGOSY

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"THE KNIGHT-ERRANT OF ARDEN."

THE ARGOSY.

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART I.—HIS BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER I.

A RECOLLECTION.

ROBERT FALCONER, schoolboy, aged fourteen, thought he had never seen his father; that is, thought he had no recollection of having ever seen him. But the moment when my story begins, he had begun to doubt whether his belief in the matter was correct. And, as he went on thinking, he became more and more assured that he had seen his father somewhere about six years before, as near as a thoughtful boy of his age could judge of the lapse of a period that would form half of that portion of his existence which was bound into one by the reticulations of memory.

For there dawned upon his mind the vision of one Sunday afternoon. Betty had gone to church, and he was alone with his grandmother, reading the *Pilgrim's Progress* to her, when, just as Christian knocked at the wicket-gate, a tap came to the street door, and he went to open it. There he saw a tall, somewhat haggard-looking man, in a shabby black coat (the vision gradually dawned upon him till it reached the minuteness of all these particulars), his hat pulled down on to his projecting eyebrows, and his shoes very dusty, as with a long journey on foot—it was a hot Sunday, he remembered that—who looked at him very strangely, and, without a word, pushed him aside and went straight into his grandmother's parlour, shutting the door behind him. He followed, not doubting that the man must have a right to go there, but questioning very much his right to shut him out. When he reached the door, however, he found it bolted; and outside he had to stay all alone, in the desolate remainder of the house till Betty came home from church.

He could even recall, as he thought about it, how drearily the afternoon had passed. First he had opened the street door, and stood in it. There was nothing going on, except a sparrow picking up crumbs, and even he wouldn't stop till he was tired of him, which would not have been long. The "Royal Oak," down the street to the right, had not even a horseless gig

or cart standing before it; and King Charles, grinning awfully in its branches on the signboard, was invisible from the distance at which he stood. In at the other end of the empty street, looked the distant uplands, whose waving corn and grass were likewise invisible, and beyond them rose one blue truncated peak in the distance, all of them wearily at rest this weary Sabbath day. However, there was one thing than which this was better, and that was being at church, which, to this boy at least, was the very fifth essence of dreariness.

He closed the door and went into the kitchen. That was nearly as bad. The kettle was on the fire, to be sure, in anticipation of tea; but the coals under it were black on the top, and it made only faint efforts, after immeasurable intervals of silence, to break into a song, giving a hum like that of a bee a mile off, and then relapsing into hopeless inactivity. Having just had his dinner he was not hungry enough to find any resource in the drawer where the oatcakes lay, and, unfortunately, the old wooden clock in the corner was going, else there would have been some amusement in trying to torment it into demonstrations of life, as he had often done in less desperate circumstances than the present. At last he went upstairs to the very room in which he now was, and sat down upon the floor, just as he was sitting now. He had not even brought his *Pilgrim's Progress* with him from his grandmother's room. But, searching about in all the holes and corners, he at length found Klopstock's *Messiah* translated into English, and took refuge there till Betty came home. Nor did he go down till she called him to tea, when, expecting to join his grandmother and the stranger, he found, on the contrary, that he was to have tea with Betty in the kitchen, after which he again took refuge with Klopstock in the garret, and remained there till it grew dark, when Betty came in search of him and put him to bed in the gable-room, and not in his usual chamber. In the morning, every trace of the visitor had vanished, even to the thorn stick which he had set down behind the door as he entered.

All this Robert Falconer saw slowly revive on the palimpsest of his memory, as he washed it with the vivifying waters of reflection.

CHAPTER II.

BETTY.

It was a very bare little room in which the boy sat. It was his favourite retreat. Behind the door, in a recess, stood an empty bedstead, without even a mattress upon it. This was the only piece of furniture in the room, unless some shelves crowded with papers tied up in bundles, and a cupboard in the wall, likewise filled with papers, could be called furniture. There was no carpet on the floor, no window in the walls. The only light came from the door, and from a small skylight in the sloping roof, which showed that it was a garret room. Nor did much light come from the open door, for there was no window on the walled stair to which it opened; only opposite to the door a few steps led up into another garret, larger, but with a lower roof, unceiled, and perforated with two or three holes, the panes of glass filling which were no larger than the small blue slates which covered the roof:

from these panes a little dim light reached the room where the boy sat on the floor, with his head almost between his knees, thinking.

But there was less light than usual now, though it was only half-past two o'clock, and the sun would not set for more than half an hour yet; for if Robert had lifted his head and looked up, it would have been at, not through, the skylight. No sky was to be seen. A thick covering of snow lay over the glass. A partial thaw, followed by frost, had fixed it there—a mass of imperfect cells and confused crystals. It was a cold place to sit in, but the boy had some faculty for enduring cold when it was the price to be paid for solitude. And besides, when he fell into one of his thinking moods, he forgot, for a season, cold and everything else but what he was thinking about—a faculty for which he was more to be envied than pitied, notwithstanding the absurdities it led him into, the consequent mockery of his schoolfellows, and the rebukes of his grandmother.

If he had gone down the stair, which described half the turn of a screw in its descent, and crossed the landing to which it brought him, he could have entered another bedroom, called the ga'le-room, equally at his service for retirement; but, though carpeted and comfortably furnished, and having two windows at right angles, commanding two streets, for it was a corner house, the boy preferred the garret-room—he could not tell why. Possibly, windows to the streets were not congenial to the meditations in which, even now, as I have said, though only twelve years old, the boy indulged.

These meditations, however, though sometimes as abstruse, if not so continuous, as those of a metaphysician—for boys are not unfrequently more given to metaphysics than older people are able or, perhaps, willing to believe—were not by any means confined to such subjects: castle-building had its full share in the occupation of those lonely hours; and for this exercise of the constructive faculty, what he knew, or rather what he did not know, of his own history gave him scope enough, nor was his brain slow in supplying him with material corresponding in quantity to the space afforded. His mother had been dead for so many years that he had only the vaguest recollections of her tenderness, and none of her person. All he was told of his father was that he had gone abroad. His grandmother would never talk about him, although he was her own son. When the boy ventured to ask a question about where he was, or when he would return, she always replied — “Bairns suld haud their tongues.” Nor would she vouchsafe another answer to any question that seemed to her from the furthest distance to bear down upon that subject. “Bairns maun learn to haud their tongues,” was the sole variation of which the response admitted. And the boy did learn to hold his tongue. Perhaps he would have thought less about his father if he had had brothers or sisters, or even if the nature of his grandmother had been such as to admit of their relationship being drawn closer into personal confidence, or some measure of familiarity. How they stood with regard to each other will soon appear.

Whether the visions had vanished from his brain because of the thickening of his blood with cold, or he merely acted from one of those undefined and inexplicable impulses which occasion not a few of our actions, I cannot

tell, but all at once Robert started to his feet and hurried from the room. At the foot of the garret stair, between it and the door of the gable-room already mentioned, stood another door at right angles to both, of the existence of which the boy was scarcely aware, simply because he had seen it all his life and had never seen it open. Turning his back on this last door, which he took for a blind one, he went down a short broad stair, at the foot of which was a window. He then turned to the left into a long flagged passage or *transe*, passed the kitchen door on the one hand, and the double-leaved street-door on the other; but, instead of going into the parlour, the door of which closed the transe, stopped at the passage window on his right, and there stood looking out.

What might be seen from this window certainly could not be called a very pleasant prospect. A broad street with low houses of cold grey stone is perhaps as uninteresting a form of street as any to be found in the world, and such was the street Robert looked out upon. Not a single member of the animal creation was to be seen in it, not a pair of eyes to be discovered looking out at any of the windows opposite. The sole motion was the occasional drift of a vapour-like film of white powder, which the wind would lift like dust from the snowy carpet that covered the street, and wafting it along for a few yards, drop again to its repose, till another stronger gust, prelude of the wind about to arise at sundown,—a wind cold and bitter as death, would rush over the street and raise a denser cloud of the white water-dust to sting the face of any improbable person who might meet it in its passage. It was a keen, knife-edged frost, even in the house, and what Robert could see to make him stand at the desolate window I do not know, and I believe he could not himself have told. There he did stand, however, for the space of five minutes or so, with nothing better filling his outer eyes at least than a *h-l-d* spot on the crown of the street, whence the wind had swept away the snow, leaving it brown and bare, a spot of March in the middle of January.

While he stood there a gentle tap came to the street door, so gentle indeed that Betty in the kitchen did not hear it, or she, tall and Roman-nosed as she was, would have answered it before the long-legged dreamer could have reached the door, though he was not above three yards from it. She did not hear it, however, and in lack of anything better to do, Robert stalked to the summons. As he opened the door, these words greeted him:

"Is Robert at—eh! it's Bob himself. Bob, I'm bious cauld."

"What for dinna ye gang hame, than?"

"What for wasna ye at the schuil the day?"

"I spier ae question at you, and ye answer me wi' anither."

"Weel, I hae nae hame to gang till."

"Weel, and I had a sair heid (*a headache*). But whaur's yer hame gane till than?"

"The hoose is there a' richt, but whaur my mither is I dinna ken. The door's lockit, and Jeames Jaup, they tell me 's tane awa' the key. I doot my mither's awa' upo' the tramp again, and what's to come o'me, the Lord kens."

"What's this o' t?" said a severe but not unmelodious voice, breaking into the conversation between the two boys; for the parlour door had opened without Robert's hearing it, and Mrs. Falconer, his grandmother, had drawn near to the speakers.

"What's this o' t?" she asked again. "Wha's that ye're conversin' wi' at the door, Robert? Gin it be ony decent laddie, tell him to come in, and no stan' at the door in sic a day 's this."

As Robert hesitated with his reply, she looked round the open half of the door, the handle of which he held with his left hand, while his head and the greater part of his person were on the other side. But she no sooner saw with whom he was talking than her tone changed. By this time Betty, wiping her hands in her apron, had completed the group by taking her stand in the kitchen door.

"Na, na," said Mrs. Falconer. "We want nane sic-like here. What does he want wi' you, Robert? Gie him a piece, Betty, and lat him gang.—Eh, sirs! the callant has hardly a stockin' fit upo' 'im, and in sic weather!"

For, before she had finished her speech, the visitor, as if dreading her nearer approach, had turned his back, and literally showed her if not a clean pair of heels yet a pair of naked heels from between the soles and uppers of his shoes, into which scarcely a thread of stocking reached, those garments ceasing almost entirely at the ankles.

"What ails him at me?" continued Mrs. Falconer, "that he rins as gin I was a boodie? But it's nae wonner he canna bide the sicht o' a decent body, for he's no used till't. What does he want wi' you, Robert?"

But Robert had reasons of friendship for not telling his grandmother what the boy had told him; for he thought the news about the boy's mother would only make her disapprove of him the more. In this he judged wrong. He did not know his grandmother yet.

"He's in my class at the schuil," said Robert, evasively.

"Him? What class, noo?"

Robert hesitated, but, compelled to give some answer, said,

"The Bible-class."

"I thoct as muckle! What gars ye play at hide and seek wi' me? Do ye think I dinna ken weel eneuch there's no a lad or a lass at the schuil but's i' the Bible-class? What wants he here?"

"Ye hardly gae him time to tell me, grannie, afore ye frichtit him."

"Me fricht him! What for suld I fricht him, laddie? I'm no sic ferlie (*wonder*) that onybody needs be frichtit at me."

And the old lady turned with visible, though by no means profound, offence upon her calm forehead, and walking back into her parlour, where Robert could see the fire burning right cheerily, shut the door, and left him and Betty standing together in the transe. The latter returned to the kitchen to resume the washing of the dinner-dishes, and the former returned to his post at the window and his meditations. Looking to the right down the street, his attention attracted by the sound of a coach-horn, he could see the other street to which the gable of the house stood, and caught sight of the mail—scarlet, spotted with white—as it went up the hill towards the chief inn

of the town, as fast as four horses tired with the bad footing the snow had afforded through the whole of the stage, could drag it. By this time the twilight was beginning to fall; for though the sun was not yet set, miles of frozen vapour came between him and the earth, and his light was never very powerful so far north at this season of the year.

Robert turned into the kitchen, and began to put on his shoes. He had made up his mind what to do.

"Ye're never gaein' oot, Robert?" said Betty, in a hoarse tone of expostulation.

"'Deed am I, Betty. What for no?"

"You 'at's been in a' day wi' a sair heid! I'll jist gang benn the hoose and tell the mistress, and syne we'll see what she'll please to say."

"Ye'll do naething o' the kin', Betty. Are ye gaein to turn clash-piet at *your* age?"

"What ken ye aboot my age? There's never a man-body i' the toon kens aught aboot my age."

"It's ower muckle for onybody to min' upo' (*remember*), is't Betty?"

"Dinna be ill-tongued, Robert, or I'll jist gang benn the hoose to the mistress."

"Betty, wha began wi' bein' ill-tongued? Gin ye tell my grandmither that I gaed oot the nicht, I'll gang to the schuilmaister o' Muckledrum, and get a sicht o' the kirstenin' buik; an' gin yer name binna' there, I'll tell ilka body I meet 'at oor Betty was never kirstened; and that'll be a sair affront, Betty."

"Hoot! was there ever sic a laddie!" said Betty, attempting to laugh it off. "Be sure ye be back afore tay-time, cause yer grannie 'll be speirin' efter ye, and ye wadna hae me lee about ye?"

"I wad hae naebody lee about me. Ye jist needna lat on 'at ye hear her. Ye can be deif eneuch when ye like, Betty. But I s' be back afore tay-time, or come on the waur."

Betty, who was in far greater fear of her age being discovered than of being unchristianized in the search, though the fact was she knew nothing certain about either question, and had no desire to be enlightened, seeing she was thus left in a measure at liberty to hint what she pleased,—Betty, I say, never had any intention of going "benn the hoose" to the mistress. It was merely the rod of terror which she thought it convenient to hold over the back of the boy, whom she always supposed to be about some mischief except he were in her own presence and visibly reading a book; if he were reading aloud, so much the better. But Robert likewise kept a rod for his own defence, and that was Betty's age, which he had discovered to be such a precious secret that one would have thought her virtue depended in some cabalistic manner upon the concealment of it. And, certainly, nature herself seemed to favour Betty's weakness, and to cast such a mist about the number of her years as the goddesses of old were wont to cast about a wounded favourite; for some said Betty was forty, others said she was sixty-five, and, in fact, almost everybody who knew her had a different belief on the matter.

Robert's object in setting out, was to find the boy whom his grandmother had driven from the door in a more hasty and abject manner than she had in the least intended. But, if his grandmother should miss him, as Betty suggested, and inquire where he had been, what was he to say? He did not mind misleading his grannie, but he had a great objection to telling her a lie. His grandmother herself delivered him from this difficulty.

"Robert, come here," she called from the parlour door. And Robert obeyed.

"Is't dingin' on, Robert?" she asked.

"No, gran'mither; it's only a starnie o' drift."

The meaning of this was that there was no fresh snow falling, or *beating* on, only a little surface snow blowing about.

"Weel, jist pit yer shune on, man, and rin up to Miss Naper's upo' the Squaur, and say to Miss Naper, wi' my compliments, that I wad be sair obleeged till her gin she wad len' me that fine receipt o' hers for crappit heids, and I'll sen' 't back safe the morn's mornin'. Rin, noo."

This commission fell in admirably with Robert's plans, and he started at once.

Miss Napier was the eldest of three maiden sisters who kept the principal hostelry of Rothieden, called "The Boar's Head;" from which, as Robert reached the square in the dusk, the mail-coach was just moving away with a fresh quaternion of horses. He found a good many boxes standing upon the pavement close by the archway that led to the inn-yard, around which had gathered a group of loungers not too cold to be interested. These were looking towards the windows of the inn, where the owner of the boxes had evidently disappeared.

"Saw ye ever sic a sicht in oor'toon afore!" said *Dooble Sanny*, as they called him, his name being Alexander Alexander, pronounced, by those who chose to speak of him with the ordinary respect due from one mortal to another, Sandy Elshender. Double Sandy was a soutar, or shoemaker, remarkable for his love of sweet sounds and whisky. He was, besides, the town-crier, who went about with a drum at certain hours of the morning and evening, like a perambulating clock, and also made public announcements of sales, losses, &c.; for the rest—a fierce, fighting fellow when in anger or in drink, which latter included the former.

"What's the sicht, Sandy?" asked Robert, coming up with his hands in the pockets of his trousers.

"Sic a sicht as ye never saw, man," returned Sandy; "the bonniest leddy ever man set his ee upo'. I culd na hae thocht there had been sic a woman in this warl."

"Hoot, Sandy!" said Robert, "a body wad think she was tint (*lost*) and ye had the cryin' o' her. Speyk laicher, man; she'll maybe hear ye. Is she i' the inn there?"

"Ay is she," answered Sandy. "See sic a warl' o' kists as she's brocht wi' her," he continued, pointing towards the pile of luggage. "Saw ye ever sic a bourach (*heap*)? It jist blecks (*beats*) me to think what ae body can du wi' sae mony kists. For I mayna doobt but there's something or ither in

ilka ane o' them. Naeboddy wad carry aboot toom (*empty*) kists wi' them. I cannot mak' it oot."

It was not very wonderful that the boxes should surprise Sandy, for his care of his own person was chiefly remarkable for non-existence.

"Are thae a' ae body's?" asked Robert.

"Troth are they. They're a' hers, I wat. Ye wad hae thocht she had been gaein to the Bothie; but gin she had been that, there wad hae been a cairriage to meet her," said Crookit Caumil, the ostler.

The Bothie was the name facetiously given by Alexander, Baron Rothie, son of the Marquis of Boarshead, to a house he had built in the neighbourhood, chiefly for the accommodation of his bachelor friends from London during the shooting season.

"Haud yer tongue, Caumil," said the shoemaker. "She's nae sic cattle, yon."

"Haud up the bit bowat (*stable-lantern*), man, and lat Robert here see the direction upo' them. Maybe he'll mak' something o't. He's a fine scholar, ye ken."

The ostler held the lantern to the card upon one of the boxes, but Robert found only an M., followed by something not very definite, and a J., which might have been an I., Rothieden, Driftshire, Scotland.

As he was not immediate with his answer, Peter Lumley, one of the group, a lazy ne'er-do-weel who had known better days but never better manners, and was seldom either drunk or sober, struck in with,

"Ye dinna ken a' thing yet, ye see, Robbie."

From Sandy this would have meant nothing but a good-humoured attempt at facetiousness. From Lumley it meant spite because Robert's praise was in his ears.

"I dinna preten' to ken ae hair mair 'han ye do yersel', Mr. Lumley; and that's nae sayin' muckle, surely," returned Robert, irritated at his tone more than at his words.

The bystanders laughed, and Lumley flew in a rage.

"Haud yer ill tongue, ye brat," he said. "Wha' are ye to mak' sic remarks upo' yer betters? A'body kens yer gran'father was naething but the blin' piper o' Portcloddie."

This was news to Robert—probably false, considering the quarter whence it came. But his mother-wit did not forsake him.

"Weel, Mr. Lumley," he answered, "didna he pipe weel? Daur ye tell me 'at he didna pipe weel? as weel's ye culd hae dune't yersel', noo, Mr. Lumley?"

The laugh again rose at Lumley's expense, who was well known to have tried his hand at most things, and succeeded in nothing. Dooble Sanny was especially delighted.

"De'il hae ye for a de'il's brat! 'At I suld sweer!" was all Lumley's reply, as he sought to conceal his mortification by joining in the laugh against himself. Robert took the opportunity of turning away and entering the house.

"That ane's no to be droont or brunt aither," said Lumley, as Robert disappeared.

"He'll no be hang't for closin' *your* mou', Mr. Lumley," said the shoemaker,

Thereupon Lumley turned and followed Robert into the inn.

Robert had delivered his message to Miss Napier, who sat in an arm-chair, by the fire, in a warm comfortable parlour, held sacred by all about the house. She was paralytic and unable to attend to her guests further than by giving orders when anything especial was referred to her decision. She was an old lady, nearly as old as Mrs. Falconer, and wore glasses, but they could not dim the kindness of her kindly eyes. Probably from giving less heed to a systematic theology, she had nothing of that sternness which first struck a stranger on seeing Robert's grandmother. But then she did not know what it was to be contradicted; and if she had been married, and had sons, perhaps a sternness not dissimilar might have come to the surface.

"Noo ye maunna gang awa' till ye get something," she said, after taking the receipt in request from a drawer within her reach and laying it upon the table. But ere she could ring the bell which stood on the table by her side, one of her servants came in.

"Please, mem," she said, "Miss Letty and Miss Lizzy's seein' efter the bonny leddy; and sae I maun come to you."

"Is she a' that bonny, Meg?" asked her mistress.

"Na, na, she's nae sae fearsome bonny; but Miss Letty's unco ta'en wi' her, ye ken. An' we a' say as Miss Letty says i' this hoose. But that's no the pint. Mr. Lumley's here, seekin' a gill: is he to hae't?"

"Has he had eneuch, already, do ye think, Meg?"

"I dinna ken aboot eneuch, mem; that's ill to mizzer; but I dinna think he's had ower muckle."

"Weel, lat him tak' it. But dinna lat him sit doon."

"Verra weel, mem."

"What gars Mr. Lumley say 'at my gran'father was the 'blin' piper o' Portcloddie? Can ye tell me, Miss Naper?" said Robert.

"Whan said he that, Robert?"

"Jist as I cam' in."

Miss Napier rang the bell. Another maid appeared.

"Sen' Meg here direckly."

Meg came.

"Dinna gie Lumley a drap. Set him up to insult a young gentleman at my door-cheek! He's no hae a drap here the nicht. Hes' *had* ower muckle, Meg, already, an' ye oucht to hae seen till 't."

"Deed, mem, hes' had mair than ower muckle, than; for there's anither gill ower the thrapple o' 'm. I did my best, mem, but never tastin' mysel', I canna aye tell hoo muckle 's i' the wame o' a' body 'at comes in."

"Ye're no fit for the place, Meg; that's a fac'."

At this charge Meg took no offence, for she had been in the place for twenty years already. And both mistress and maid laughed the moment they had parted company.

"Wha's this 'at's come the nicht, Miss Naper, 'at they're sae ta'en wi'?" asked Robert.

"Atweel, I dinna ken yet. She's ower bonnie by a' accounts to be gaein' about her lanè (*alone*). It's a mercy the baron's no at hame. I wad hae to lock her up wi' the forks and spunes."

"What for that?" asked Robert; but Miss Napier vouchsafed no further explanation. She stuffed his pockets with sweet biscuits instead, dismissed him in haste, and rang the bell.

"Meg, whaur hae they putten the stranger-leddy?"

"She's no gaeing to bide at our hoose, mem."

"What say ye, lass? She's never gaein' ower to Lucky Happit's, is she?"

"Ow na, mem. She's a lady, ilka inch o' her. But she's some sib to the auld captain, and she's gaein doon the street as sune's Caumil's ready to tak' her bit boxies i' the barrow. But I doobt there'll be maist three barrowfu's o't."

"Aweel. Ye can gang."

CHAPTER III.

SHARGAR.

ROBERT went out into the thin drift, and again crossing the wide desolate-looking square, turned down an entry leading to a kind of court, which had once been inhabited by a well-to-do class of the townspeople, but which had now fallen into disrepair. Upon a stone at the door of an outhouse he discovered the object of his search.

"What are ye sittin' there for, Shargar?"

Shargar is a Scotch word applied, with some sense of the ludicrous, to a thin, wasted, dried-up creature. In the present case it was the nickname by which the boy was known at school, and indeed generally where he was known at all.

"What are ye sittin' there for, Shargar? Did naebody offer to take ye in?"

"Na, nane o' them. I think they maun be a' i' their beds. I'm most dreidfu' cauld."

The fact was, that Shargar's character, whether by imputation from his mother, or derived from his own actions, was none of the best. The consequence was, that although scarcely one of the neighbours would have allowed him to sit there much longer, each was willing to wait a little, to see whether somebody else's humanity would not give in first, and save her from the necessity of offering him a seat by the fireside, and a share of the oatmeal porridge which probably would be scanty enough for her own household. For it must be borne in mind that all the houses in the place were occupied by poor people, with whom Charity was at home, and, notwithstanding a thousand faults of every kind, yet managed to reside with some measure of comfort.

"Get up than, Shargar, ye lazy beggar! Or are ye frozen for to the door-stane? I s' awa' for a kettle o' bilin' water to lowse ye."

"Na, na, Bob. I'm nae stucken. I'm only some stiff wi' the cauld; for wow, but I am cauld!" said Shargar, rising with difficulty. "Gie's a haud o' yer han', Bob."

Robert gave him his hand, and Shargar was straightway upon his feet.

"Come awa' noo, as fest and as quaiet 's ye can."

"What are ye gaein' to do wi' me, Bob?"

"What's that to you, Shargar?"

"Naething. Only I wad like to ken."

"Hae patience, and ye will ken. Only mind ye do as I tell ye, and dinna speik a word."

Shargar followed in silence.

On the way Robert remembered that Miss Napier had not, after all, given him the receipt for which his grandmother had sent him. So, leaving Shargar in the archway, ~~while~~ he himself went into the Boar's Head.

Shargar stood shivering, and trying in vain to warm his hands by alternately slapping them on the opposite arms, and hiding them under them.

When Robert came out, he saw a man talking to him under the lamp that lighted the archway. Shargar was right under the arch, the man at the side, so that Shargar was shadowed by the frame of the lamp, and the man in its full light, such as it was. At the same moment that he was struck by a great resemblance between the two, the man turned away, and passing Robert, went into the inn.

"Wha's that?" asked Robert.

"I dinna ken. He spak to me or ever I kent he was there, and jist garred my hert gie sic a loup 's it maist fell into my breeks."

"And what said he to ye?"

"He said was the deevil at my lug, that I did naething but caw my han's to bits upo' my shootthers."

"And what said ye to that?"

"I said I wissed he was for he wad aiblins hae some spare heat aboot him, for mine was a' gane."

"Weel dune, Shargar! What said he to that?"

"He leuch, and speirt gin I wad list, and gae me a shillin'."

"Ye didna tak' it, Shargar?" asked Robert in some alarm.

"Ay did I. Catch me no takin' a shillin'!"

"But they'll haud ye till't."

"Na, na. I'm ower shochlin' (*in-kneed*) for a sodger. But that man was nae sodger."

"And what mair said he?"

"He speirt what I wad do wi' the shillin'."

"And what said ye?"

"Ow! syne ye cam' oot, and he gaed awa'."

"And ye dinna ken wha' it was?" repeated Robert.

"I think it was some like my brither, Lord Sandy, but I dinna ken," said Shargar.

By this time they had arrived at Yule the baker's shop.

"Bide ye here," said Robert, who happened to possess a few coppers, "till I gang into Eel's."

Shargar stood like a sentry at the door, till Robert came out with a penny loaf in one hand, and a twopenny loaf in the other.

"Gie's a bit, Bob," said Shargar. "I'm as hungry as I am cauld."

"Bide ye still," said Robert. "There's a time for a'thing, and your time's no' come to forgather wi' this loaf yet. Does na it smell fine? It's new frae the bakehouse no' ten minutes ago. I ken by the fin' (*feel*) o't."

"Lat me fin' 't," said Shargar, stretching out one hand, and feeling his shilling with the other.

"Na. Yer han's canna' be clean. And fowk suld aye eat clean, whether they gang clean or no."

"I'll awa' in an' buy ane oot o' my ain shillin'," said Shargar, unable to submit longer.

"Ye'll do naething o' the kin'," returned Robert, darting his hand at his collar. "I never had a shillin' i' my life, an' ye'll want it a' or lang."

Again Shargar slunk behind, and Robert led the way till they came to his grandmother's door.

"Gang to the ga'le o' the hoose there, Shargar, and jist keek roun' the neuk at me; an' gin I whistle upo' ye, come up as quaiet's ye can. Gin I dinna', bide till I come to ye."

Robert opened the door cautiously. It was never locked except at night, or when Betty had gone to the well for water, or to the butcher's or baker's or the prayer-meeting, upon which occasions she put the key in her pocket, and left her mistress a prisoner. He looked first to the right, along the passage, and saw that his grandmother's door was shut; then across the passage to the left, and saw that the kitchen-door was shut because of the cold, for its normal condition was against the wall. Whereupon, closing the door, but keeping the handle in his hand and the bolt drawn back, he turned to the street and whistled soft and low. Shargar had, in a moment, dragged his heavy feet, ready to part company with their shoes at any instant, to Robert's side. He bent his ear to Robert's whisper.

"Gang in there, and creep like a moose to the fit o' the stair. I maun close the door ahin' 's."

"I'm fleyt (*frightened*), Robert."

"Dinna be a fule. Grannie winna bite aff yer heid. She had ane till her denner, the day, an' it was ill sung (*singed*)."

"What ane o'?"

"A sheep's heid, ye gowk. Gang in direckly."

Shargar persisted no longer, but, taking about four steps a minute, slunk past the kitchen-door like a thief—not so carefully, however, but that one of his soles still looser than the other, gave one clap upon the flags of the passage, and Betty straightway stood in the kitchen-door, a fierce picture in a deal-frame. By this time Robert had closed the door, and now followed Shargar.

"What's this?" she cried, but not so loud as to reach the ears of Mrs. Falconer; for with true Scotch caution, she would not willingly call in another power until the situation demanded it. "Whaur's Shargar gaein' that gait?"

"Wi' me. Dinna ye see me wi' him? I'm nae a thief, nor yet's Shargar."

"There may be twa opingons upo' that, Robert. I s' jist awa' benn to the mistress. I s' hae nae sic doin's i' my hoose."

"It's nae your hoose, Betty. Dinna lee."

"Weel, I s' hae nae sic things gang by my kitchie-door. There, Robert! what 'll ye mak' o' that? There's nae offence there, I houp, gin it suldna be ategither my ain hoose. Tak' Shargar oot o' that' or I s' awa' benn the hoose, as I tell ye."

Meantime Shargar was standing on the stones, looking like a terrified white rabbit, and shaking from head to foot with cold and fright combined.

"I 'll ta' him oot o' this, but it's up the stair, Betty. An' gin ye gang benn the hoose aboot it, I sweir to ye, as sure's death, I'll gang doon to Muckledrum upo' Setterday i' the efternune."

"Gang awa' wi' yer havers. Only gin the mistress speirs onything about it, what am I to say?"

"Bide till she spiers. Auld Spunkie says, 'Ready-made answers are aye to seek.' And I say, Betty, hae ye a cauld pitawta?"

"I 'll luik and see. Wadna ye like it het up?"

"Ow ay, gin ye binna lang aboot it."

Suddenly a bell rang, shrill and peremptory, right above Shargar's head, making him respond in added trembling, if not in sound.

"Haud oot o' my gait. There's the mistress's bell."

"Jist bide till we're roun' the neuk and on to the stair," said Robert, now leading the way.

Betty watched them safe round the corner, before making for the parlour, little thinking to what she had become an unwilling accomplice, for she never imagined that more than an evening's visit was intended by Shargar, which in itself seemed to her strange and improper enough even for such an eccentric boy as Robert to encourage.

Shargar followed in mortal terror, for, like Christian in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, he had no armour to his back. Once round the corner, two strides of three steps each took them to the top of the first stair, Shargar knocking his head against the never-opened door at the top, for it was now verging close upon darkness. Three strides more brought them to the top of the second flight; and, turning once more, now to the right, Robert led Shargar into the upper of the two garrets.

Here there was just light enough to see a close bedstead, built as far under the sloping roof as it would go, which served it for a tester, while the two ends and most of the front were boarded up to the roof. Fortunately this was not so bare as the one in the other room, although it had not been used for many years, for an old mattress covered the boards with which it was bottomed.

"Gang in there, Shargar. Ye 'll be warmer there than upo' the door-step ony gait. Pit aff yer shune."

Shargar obeyed, delighted to find himself in such good quarters. Robert went to a forsaken press in the room, and brought out an ancient cloak of tartan, a blue dress coat with plain gilt buttons, almost as bright as ever, had there been light enough to see them by, and several other garments, which it is needless further to specify than by the mention of a kilt as one of them, and heaped them all over Shargar as he lay on the mattress. He then

handed him the twopenny and the penny loaves, which were all his stock would reach to the purchase of, and left him, saying,—

"I maun awa' to my tay, Shargar. I'll fess ye a cauld tawtie het again, gin Betty has ony. Lie still, and whatever ye do, dinna come oot o' that."

But the last injunction was entirely unnecessary.

"Eh, Bob, I'm jist in haiven!" said the poor creature, as his skin began to feel the precious possibility of reviving warmth in the distaunce.

Indeed, now that he had gained a new earth, the human animal soon recovered from his fears. It seemed to him, in the novelty of the place, that he had made so many doublings to reach it, that there was no danger of even the mistress of the house finding him out, for she could hardly be supposed to look after such a remote corner of her dominions. And then he was boxed in with the bed, and covered with no end of warm garments, while the friendly darkness about closed him all around. Except the faintest blue gleam from one of the panes in the roof, there was soon no hint of light anywhere; and as the Shargar lay and devoured the new "white breid," his satisfaction—the bare delight of his animal existence—reached a pitch such as his imagination, stunted with poverty, and frost-bitten with maternal oppression, had never conceived possible. The power of enjoying the present without anticipation of the future or regard of the past, is the especial privilege of the animal nature and of the human nature in proportion as it has not been developed beyond the animal. Herein lies the happiness of cab horses and of tramps, to whom the gift of forgetfulness is of worth inestimable. And Shargar's heaven was for the present gained.

CHAPTER IV.

ALEXANDER, BARON ROTHIE.

ROBERT had scarcely turned out of the square on his way to find Shargar, when a horseman entered it from another side. He was wrapped in a large cloak. His horse and he were both apparently black on one side and grey on the other, from the snow-drift settling to windward. The animal looked tired, but the rider sat as easy as if he were riding to cover. The reins hung loose, but the horse took his way in a straight line for the "Boar's Head," stopping under the archway only when his master drew bridle at the door of the inn.

At that moment Miss Letty was standing at the back of her sister's chair, leaning her arms upon it as she talked to her. This was Miss Letty's way of resting as often as occasion arose for a chat with her elder sister. Her hair was gathered in a great knot at the top of her head, and little ringlets hung like tendrils down the sides of her face, the benevolence of which was less immediately striking than that of her sister's, because of the constant play of humour upon it, especially about her mouth. If a spirit of satire could be supposed converted into something Christian by an infusion of the tenderest loving-kindness and humanity, and still recognizable notwithstanding that all its bitterness was gone, that was the expression of Miss Letty's mouth. It was always half puckered as if in resistance to a comic

smile, which showed itself at the windows of the keen grey eyes however the mouth might be able to keep it in-doors. She was neatly dressed in black silk, with a lace collar. And her hands were small and white.

The moment the traveller stopped at the door, Miss Napier started.

"Letty," she said, "wha's that? I could amaist sweir it's Black Geordie's fit."

"A' four o' them, I think," returned Miss Letty, as the horse began to paw and move impatiently about on the stones, for it was cold.

The rider had not yet spoken.

"He'll be efter some o' 's deevil-ma'-care sculduddery. But jist rin to the door, Letty, or Lizzy 'ill be there afore ye, and maybe she wadna be ower ceevil. What can he be efter noo?"

"What wad the grew (*grayhound*) be efter but maukin (*bare*)?" said Miss Letty, visibly uneasy about her charge.

"Hoot! nonsense! He kens naething about her. Gang to the door, lassie."

Miss Letty obeyed.

"Wha's there?" she asked, somewhat sharply, as she opened it, "that neither chaps (*knocks*) nor ca's? Preserve 's a'! is't you, my lord?"

"Hoo ken ye me, Miss Letty, withoot seein' my face?"

"A'boddy at the Boar's Heid kens Black Geordie as weel 's yer lordship's ain sel'. But whaur comes yer lordship frae in sic a nicht as this?"

"From Russia. I never dismounted between Moscow and Aberdeen. I rode across on the ice."

And the baron laughed inside the upturned collar of his cloak, for he knew that there were strangely exaggerated stories current about his feats in the saddle.

"That's a lang rid, my lord, and a sliddery. And what's yer lordship's wull?"

"Lord's sake, woman! don't stand jawing there in a night like this. Is nobody going to take my horse?"

"I beg yer lordship's pardon. Caumil!—Yer lordship never said ye wanted yer lordship's horse ta'en. I thocht ye micht be gaein on to the Bothie.—Tak Black Geordie here, Caumil. Come in to the parlour, my lord."

"How d'ye do, Miss Naper?" said Lord Rothie, entering the room. "Here's this jade of a sister of yours asking me why I don't go home to the Bothie, when I choose to stop and water here."

"What'll ye tak', my lord? Letty, fess the brandy."

"Oh! damn your brandy! Bring me a gill of good Glenlivat."

"Rin, Letty. His lordship's cauld. I canna rise to offer ye the. airm-cheer, my lord."

"I can get one for myself, thank heaven!"

"Lang may yer lordship return sic thanks."

"For I'm only new begun, ye think, Miss Naper. Well, I don't often trouble heaven with my affairs. By Jove! I ought to be heard when I do."

"Nae doobt ye will, my lord, whan ye seek onything that's fit to be gien you."

"True. Heaven's gifts are seldom much worth the asking."

"Haud yer tongue, my lord, and dinna bring doon a judgment upo' my hoose, for it wad be missed oot o' Rothymden."

"You're right there, Miss Naper. And here comes the whisky to stop my mouth."

The Baron of Rothie sat for a few minutes with his feet on the fender before Miss Letty's blazing fire, without speaking, while he sipped the whisky neat from a wine-glass. He was a man about the middle height, rather full-figured, muscular and active, with a small head and an eye whose brightness had not yet been dimmed by the sensuality which might be read in the condition rather than frame of his countenance. But while he spoke so pleasantly to the Miss Napiers, and his forehead spread broad and smooth over the twinkle of his hazel eye, there was a sharp curve on each side of his upper lip, half-way between the corner and the middle, which reminded one of the same curves in the lip of his ancestral boar's-head, where it was lifted up by the protruding tusks. These curves disappeared of course when he smiled, and his smile, being a lord's, was generally pronounced irresistible. He was good-natured, and nowise inclined to stand upon his rank, so long as he had his own way.

"Any customers by the mail to-night, Miss Naper?" he asked, in a careless tone.

"Naeboddy particular, my lord."

"I thought ye never let anybody in that wasn't particularly particular. No foot passengers—eh?"

"Hoot, my lord! that's twa year ago. Gin I had thocht that it was a frien' o' yer lordship's, forby bein' a lord himsel', ye ken as weel's I du that I wadna hae sent him ower the gait to Luckie Happit's, whaur he wadna even be ower sure o' gettin' clean sheets. But gin lords an' lords' sons will walk afit like ither fowk, wha's to ken them frae ither fowk?"

"Well, Miss Naper, he was no lord at all. He was nothing but a factor-body doon frae Glenbucket."

"There was sma' hairm durie than, my lord. I'm glaid to hear 't. But what'll yer lordship hae to yer supper?"

"I would like a dish o' your chits and nears (*sweetbreads and kidneys*)."

"Noo, think o' that!" returned the landlady, laughing. "You great fowk wad hae the verra coorse o' natur' turned upside doon to suit yersels. Wha ever heard o' caure (*calves*) at this time o' the year?"

"Well, anything you like. Who was it came by the mail, did you say?"

"I said naeboddy particular, my lord."

"Well, I'll just go and have a look at Black Geordie."

"Verra weel, my lord.—Letty, rin an' luik efter him; and as sune's he's roun' the neuk, tell Lizzie no to say a word about the ledly. As sure's deith he's efter her. Whaur culd he hae heard o' her?"

Lord Rothie came, in a moment after, sauntering into the bar-parlour, where Lizzie, the third Miss Napier, a red-haired, round-eyed, white-toothed woman of forty, was making entries in a book.

"She's a bonnie lassie that, that came in the coach to-night, they say, Miss Lizzie."

"As ugly's sin, my lord," answered Lizzie.

"I hae seen some sin 'at was nane sae ugly, Miss Lizzie."

"She wad hae clean scunnert (*disgusted*) ye, my lord. It's a mercy ye didna see her."

"If she be as ugly as all that, I would just like to see her."

Miss Lizzie saw she had gone too far.

"Ow, deed! gin yer lordship wants to see her, ye may see her at yer wull. I s' gang and tell her."

And she rose as if to go.

"No, no. Nothing of the sort, Miss Lizzie. Only I heard that she was bonnie, and I wanted to see her. You know I like to look at a pretty girl."

"That's ower weel kent, my lord."

"Well, there's no harm in that, Miss Lizzie."

"There's no harm in *that*, my lord, though yer lordship says 't."

The facts were that his lordship had been to the county-town some forty miles off, and Black Geordie had been sent to Hillknow to meet him; for in any weather that would let him sit, he preferred horseback to every other mode of travelling, though he never would be followed by a groom. He had posted to Hillknow and had dined with a friend at the Inn. The coach stopping to change horses, he had caught a glimpse of a pretty face, as he thought, from its window, and had hoped to overtake the coach before it reached Rothieden. But stopping to drink another bottle, he had failed; and it was on the merest chance of seeing that pretty face, that he stopped at the "Boar's Head." In all probability, had the marquis seen the lady, he would not have thought her at all such a beauty as she appeared in the eyes of Dooble Sanny; nor, I venture to think, had he thought her such, would he yet have dared to address her in other than the words of such respect as he could still feel in the presence of that which was more noble than himself.

Whether on his visit to the stable he found anything amiss with Black Geordie, or a mere whim took possession of him, I cannot tell, but he now begged Miss Lizzie to have a bedroom prepared for him.

It happened to be the evening of Friday, one devoted by some of the townspeople to a symposium. To this, knowing that the talk will throw a glimmer on several matters, I will now introduce my reader, as a spectator through the reversed telescope of my history.

A few of the more influential of the inhabitants had grown, rather than formed themselves, into a kind of club, which met weekly at the "Boar's Head." Although they had no exclusive right to the room in which they sat, they generally managed to retain exclusive possession of it: for if any supposed-objectionable person entered, they always managed to get rid of him, sometimes without his being aware of how they had contrived to make him so uncomfortable. They began to gather generally about seven o'clock, when it was expected that boiling-water would be in readiness for the compound generally called *toddy*, sometimes *punch*. As soon as six were assembled, one was always voted into the chair, and to him any question in dispute might be submitted.

On the present occasion, Mr. Innes, the schoolmaster, was unanimously

elected to that honour. He was a hard-featured, sententious, snuffy individual, with some learning, and of great respectability.

I omit all the political talk with which their intercommunications began ; for however interesting at the time is the scaffolding by which existing institutions arise, the poles and beams when gathered again in the builder's yard are scarcely a subject for the artist.

"Hoo is't, do ye ken, Mr. Cocker?" said William MacGregor, the linen manufacturer, a man who possessed a score of hand-loom, or so—not half of which were now in use, from the advance of cotton and the decline of linen-wear—but who had already a sufficient deposit in the hands of Mr. Thomson the bank-agent, that is, for the county bank—to secure him against any necessity for taking to cotton shirts himself, which were an abomination in his eyes.

"Can ye tell me, Mr. Cocker, what mak's Sandy, Lord Rothie, or Wrathie, or what sud he be ca'd? tak' to the Bothie at a time like this, whan there's nae huntin', or fishin', or shutin', or onything o' the kin' aboot han' to be playacks till him, the bonnie bairn, cep' it be otters an' sic like?"

William was a shrunken old man, with white whiskers and a black wig, a keen black eye, always in search of the ludicrous in other people, and a mouth always on the move, as if masticating something comical.

"You know just as well as I do," answered Mr. Cocker, the Marquis of Boarshead's factor for the neighbouring estate. "He never was in the way of giving a reason for anything, least of all for his own movements."

"Somebody was sayin' to me," resumed MacGregor, who, in all probability, had invented the story, "that the prince took him kissin' ane o' his servan' lasses, and kickit him oot o' Carlton Hoose into the street, and he canna win' ower the disgrace o' t."

"'Deed for the kissin'," said Mr. Thomson, a portly, comfortable-looking man, "that's neither here nor there, though it micht hae been a duchess or twa ; but for the kickin', my word ! but Lord Sandy was mair likly to kick oot the prince. Do ye min' hoo he did whan the Markis taxed him wi' ——?"

"Haud a quaiet sough," interposed Mr. Cruickshank, the solicitor ; "there's a drap i' the hoose."

This was a phrase well understood by the company, indicating the presence of some one unknown, or unfit to be trusted.

As he spoke he looked towards the farther end of the room, which lay in obscurity ; for it was a large room, lighted only by the four candles on the table at which the company sat.

"Whaur, Mr. Cruickshank?" asked the Dominic in a whisper.

"There," answered Sampson Peddie, the bookseller, who seized the opportunity of saying something.

They now saw a dim figure seated at a table in the farthest corner of the room. A certain awe fell upon the company, but no one was prepared to confess it, and they proceeded to carry out the plan they generally adopted to get rid of a stranger.

"Ye made use o' a curious auld Scots phrase this moment, Mr. Curshank : do ye ken hoo it comes to beir that meanin'?" said the manufacturer.

"Not I, Mr. MacGregor," answered the solicitor. "I'm no philologist or antiquarian. Ask the chairman."

"Gentlemen," responded Mr. Innes, taking a huge pinch of snuff after the word, and then, passing the box to Mr. Cocker, a sip from his glass before he went on: "the phrase, gentlemen, 'a drap i' the hoose,' no doobt refers to an undesirable presence, because one o' the most unpleasing discoveries, in winter especially, is to find a drop o' water hangin' from yer ceiling; a something, in short, whaur it has no business to be, and is not accordingly looked for or prepared against."

"It seems to me, Mr. Innes," said MacGregor, "that ye hae hit the nail, but no upo' the heid. What mak' ye o' the phrase, no confined to the Scots tongue, I believe, o' an *eaves-drapper*? the whilk, no doobt, represents a body that hangs aboot yer winnock, like a drap hangin' ower abune it frae the eaves—therefore called an eaves-dropper? But the sort of which we now speak, are a waur sort a'thegither; for they come to the inside o' yer hoose, o' yer verra chaumer, an' hing oot their lang lugs to hear what ye carena to be hard save by a dooce frien' or twa ower a het tum'ler."

At the same moment the door opened, and a man entered, who was received with unusual welcome.

"Bless my soul!" said the president, rising; "it's Mr. Lammie! Sit doon; sit doon. Whaur hae ye been this mony a day, like a pelican o' the wilderness?"

Mr. Lammie was a large, mild man, with florid cheeks, no whiskers, and a prominent black eye. He was characterized by a certain simple alacrity, a gentle, but outspoken readiness, which made him a favourite.

"I dinna richtly mak' oot wha ye are," said he. "Ye hae unco little licht here! Hoo are ye a', gentlemen? I s' discover ye by degrees, and pay my respects accordin'."

And he drew a chair to the table.

"'Deed I wuss ye wad," returned MacGregor, in a voice pretentiously hushed, but none the less audible. "There's a drap in yon en' o' the hoose."

"Hoot! never min' the man," said Lammie, looking round in the direction indicated. "I s' warran' he cares as little aboot hiz as we care aboot him. There's nae treason noo-a-days. I carena wha hears what I say."

"For my part," said Mr. Peddie, "I begin to think him unco like oor auld frien' Mr. Faulkener. Poor Anerew!"

"Speyk o' the deil—" said Mr. Lammie.

"Hoot! na," returned Peddie, interrupting. "He wasna a'thegither the deil."

"Haud the tongue o' ye," retorted Lammie. "Dinna ye ken a proverb whan ye hear 't? Deil hae ye! ye're as sharpset as a missionar'. I was only gaun to say that I'm doobtin' he's deid."

"Ay! ay!"

"Mhm!"

"Aaay!"

"What gars ye think that?"

"And sae he's deid!"

"He was a great favourite, Anerew!"

"Whaur dee'd he?"

"Aye some upsettin' though!"

"Aye. He was aye to be somebody wi' his tale."

"A gude-hertit crater, but ye culdna lippen till him."

"Speyk nae ill o' the deid. Maybe they'll hear ye, and turn roun' i' the grave, and that 'll whumble you i' your beds," said MacGregor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ring the bell for anither tum'ler, Sampson," said the chairman.

"What 'll be dune wi' that factory-place noo? It 'll be i' the market."

"It's been i' the market for mony a year. But it's no his ava. It belongs to the auld ledly, his mither."

"Why don't you buy it, Mr. MacGregor, and set up a cotton mill? There's not much doing with the linen now," said Mr. Cocker.

"Me!" returned MacGregor, with indignation. "The Lord forgie ye for mintin' (*hinting*) at sic a thing, Mr. Cocker! Me tak' to coaton! I wad as sune spin the hair frae Sawtan's hurdies. Short fushionless dirt, that canna grow straucht oot o' the halesome yird, like the bonnie lint-bells, but maun stick itself upo' a buss!—set it up! Coorse vulgar stuff, 'at naebody wad weir but loup coonter lads that want to luik like gentlemen by means o' the collars and ruffles an' a' comin' frae the auld loom! They may weel afford se'enteen hunner linen to set it aff wi' 'at has naething but coaton inside the breeks o' them."

"But Dr. Wagstaff says it's healthier," interposed Peddie.

"I'll wag a staff till him. Deil a bit o' 't's healthier! an' that he kens. It's nae sae healthy, an' mak's him mair wark wi' 's pootherers an' his drauchts, an' ither stinkin' stuff. Healthier! What neist?"

"Somebody tellt me," said the bookseller, inwardly conscious of offence, "'at hoo Lord Sandy himsel' weirs cotton."

"Ow 'deed, maybe. And he sets mony a worthy example furby. Hoo mony, can ye tell me, Mr. Peddie, has he pulled doon frae honest, if no frae high estate, and sent oot to seek their livin' as he taucht them? "Hoo mony——?"

"Hoot, hoot! Mr. MacGregor, his lordship 'hasn't a cotton shirt in his possession, I'll be bound," said Mr. Cocker. "And, besides, you have not to wash his dirty linen or cotton either."

"That's as muckle as to say, accordin' to Cocker, that I'm no to speik a word against him. But I'll say what I like. He's no *my* maister," said MacGregor, who could drink very little without suffering in his temper and manners in consequence; and who, besides, had a certain shrewd suspicion as to the person who still sat in the dark end of the room.

The chairman interposed with soothing words; and the whole company Cocker included, did its best to pacify the manufacturer; for they all knew what would be the penalty if they failed.

A great deal of talk followed, and a good deal of whisky was drunk. They were waited upon by Meg, who, without their being aware of it, turned and cast a keen parting glance at them every time she left the room. At length the conversation had turned again to Andrew Falconer's death."

"Whaur said ye he dee'd, Mr. Lammie?"

"I never said he was deid. I said I was feared 'at he was deid."

"An' what gars ye say that? It micht be o' consequence to hae't correck," said the solicitor.

"I had a letter frae my auld frien' and his, Dr. Anderson. Ye min' upo' him, Mr. Innes, dunna ye? He's heid o' the medical boord at Calcutta noo. He says naething but that he doobts he's gane. He gaed up the country, and he hasna hard o' him for sae lang! We hae keepit up a correspondence for mony a year noo, Dr. Anderson an' me. He was a relation o' Anerew's, ye ken—a second cousin, or something. He'll be hame or lang, I'm thinkin', wi' a fine pension."

"He winna weir a cotton sark, I'll be boun'," said MacGregor.

"What's the auld leddy gaein' to du wi' that lang-leggit oye (*grandson*) o' hers, Anerew's son?" asked Sampson.

"Ow! he'll be gaein' to the college, I'm thinkin'. He's a fine lad and a clever, they tell me," said Mr. Thomson.

"Indeed, he's all that, and more too," said the schoolmaster.

"There's naething 'll du but the college noo!" said MacGregor, whom nobody heeded, for fear of again rousing his anger.

"Hoo 'ill she manage that, honest woman? She maun hae but little to spare frae the cleedin' o' 'm."

"She's a gude manager, Mrs. Faulkner. And, ye see, she has the bleach-green yet."

"*She* doesna weir cotton sarks," growled MacGregor. "Mony's the wob o' mine she's bleached and boucht tu!"

Nobody heeding him yet, he began to feel insulted, and broke in upon the conversation with intent.

"Ye haena telt's, Cocker," said he, "what that maister o' yours is duin' here at this time o' the year."

"How should I know, Mr. MacGregor?" returned the factor, taking no notice of the offensive manner in which the question was put.

"He's nae a hair better nor ane o' thae Algerine pirates 'at Lord Exmouth's het the hips o', and that's my opingon."

"He's nae amo' your feet, MacGregor," said the banker. "Ye micht jist lat him lie."

"Gin I had him doon, faith gin I wadna lat him lie! I'll jist tell ye ae thing, gentlemen, that cam' to my knowledge no a hunner year ago. An it's a' as true's gospel, though I hae aye held my tongue aboot it till this verra nicht. Ay! ye'll a' hearken noo; but it's no lauchin', though there was sculduddery eneuch, nae doobt, afore it cam' that len'th. And mony a het drap did the puir lassie greet, I can tell ye. Faith! it was no lauchin' to her. She was a servan' o' oors, an' a ticht bonnie lass she was. They ca'd her the weyver's bonny Mary—that's the name she gaed by. Weel, ye see——"

MacGregor was interrupted by a sound from the further end of the room. The stranger, whom most of them had by this time forgotten, had risen, and was approaching the table where they sat.

"Guid guide us!" muttered several under their breaths, as all rose, "it's Lord Sandy himsel'!"

"I thank you, gentlemen," he said, with a mixture of irony and contempt, "for the interest you take in my private history. I should have thought it had been as little to the taste as it is to the honour of *some* of you to listen to such a farrago of lies."

And he glanced slightly from one to another of them. Mr. Cocker looked dismayed, and Mr. Lammie sheepish; all of them dazed and dumbfounded, except the old weaver, who, as his lordship turned to leave the room, said:

"Lang lugs (*ears*) suld be made o' leather, my lord, for fear they grow het wi' what they hear."

Lord Rothie turned in a rage. He too had been drinking.

"Kick that toad into the street, or, by heaven! it's the last drop any of you drink in this house!"

"The taed may tell the poddock (*frog*) what the rottan (*rat*) did i' the taed's hole, my lord," said MacGregor, whom independence, honesty, bile, and drink combined to render fearless.

Lord Sandy left the room without another word. His factor took his hat and followed him, and the rest dropped into their seats in silence. Mr. Lammie was the first to speak.

"There's a pliskie!" said he.

"I culd jist say the word efter auld Simeon," said MacGregor. "I never thocht to be sae favoured! Eh! but I hae langed, and noo I hae spoken!"

When Mr. Cocker overtook his master, as MacGregor had not unfitly styled him, he only got a damning for his pains. Nor did his lordship make any allusion to his mortification in the ears of his landlady.

Meantime the consternation amongst those who were left was not so great as not to be talked over, or to prevent the call for more whisky and hot water. All but MacGregor, however, regretted what had occurred. He was so elevated with his victory and a sense of his own courage and prowess, that he became more and more facetious and overbearing.

"It's all very well for you, Mr. MacGregor," said the dominie, with dignity, "you have nothing to lose."

"Troth! he canna brak the bank—eh, Mr. Tamson?"

"He may give me a hint to make you withdraw your money, though, Mr. MacGregor."

"Deil care gin I do!" returned the weaver.

"An' there's yer hoose an' kail-yard," suggested Peddie.

"They're ma ain! He canna lay's finger on anything but my servan' lasses," cried the weaver, slapping his thigh-bone—for there was little else to slap.

Meg, at the moment, was taking her exit-glance. She went straight to Miss Napier.

"Willie MacGregor's had eneuch, mem, an' a drappy ower."

"Sen' Caamil doon to tell Mrs. MacGregor that she wad do weel to send for him. We maunna hae sic on-gaein's i' my hoose."

By this time MacGregor had got more than troublesome. Ever on the outlook, when sober, after the foibles of others, he laid himself and his

observation and wisdom open to endless ridicule when in drink, which, to tell the truth, was a rare occurrence. He was in the midst of a prophetic denunciation of the vices of the nobility, and especially of Lord Rothie, when Meg went quietly behind his chair, and whispered:

"Maister MacGregor, there's a lassie come for ye."

"I'm nae in," answered he, magnificently.

"But it's the mistress 'at's sent for ye. Somebody's wantin' ye."

"Somebody may want me, than. As I was sayin', Mr. Cheerman and gentlemen——"

"Mistress MacGregor 'll be efter ye hersel', gin ye dinna gang," said Meg.

"Lat her come. Duv ye think I'm fley't at her? Deil a step 'll I gang till I please. Tell her that, Meg."

Meg left the room, with a broad grin on her good-humoured face.

"What's the bitch lauchin' at?" exclaimed MacGregor, starting to his feet.

The whole company rose likewise, and used vain attempts to persuade him to go home.

"Duv ye think I'm drunk, sirs? I'll lat ye ken I'm no drunk. I hae a will o' mine ain yet. Am I to gang hame wi' a lassie to haud me oot o' the gutters? Gin ye daur to alloo that I'm drunk, ye ken hoo ye'll fare, for deil a fit 'll I gang oot o' this till I hae anither tum'ler."

"I'm thinkin' there's mair o' 's jist want anither tum'ler," said Peddie.

And a confirmatory murmur arose as each looked into the bottom of his tumbler. The bell was rung, but brought Meg back with the message that it was time for them all to go home. Every eye turned upon MacGregor, reproachfully.

"Ye needna luik at me that gait, sirs. I'm no fou."

"'Deed no. Naebody thinks ye are," answered the chairman. "Meggie, there's naebody had ower muckle yet, and twa or three o' 's hasna had freely eneuch. Jist gang an' fess a mutchkin mair. An' there 'll be a shillin' to yersel', lass."

Meg retired, but straightway returned.

"Miss Naper says there's no a drap mair drink to be had the nicht i' this hoose."

"Here, Meggie," said the chairman, "there's yer shillin'; and ye jist gang to Miss Lettie, and gie her my compliments, and say that Mr. Lammie's here, and we haena seen him for a lang time. And"—the rest was spoken in a whisper—"I'll sweir to ye, Meggie, the weyver body sanna hae ae drop o' 't."

Meg withdrew once more, and returned.

Miss Letty's compliments, sir, and Miss Naper has the keys, and she's gane till her bed, and we maunna disturb her. And it's time 'at a' honest fowk was in their beds tu. And gin Mr. Lammie wants a bed i' this hoose, he maun gang till 't. And here's his can'le."

Having set the candle alight on the sideboard, Meg finally vanished. The good-tempered, who formed the greater of the company, smiled to each other, and emptied the last drops of their toddy first into their glasses, and thence into their mouths. The ill-tempered, numbering MacGregor and Peddie, growled and swore a little, the former declaring that he would not go

home. The rest accordingly walked out and left him there, when, appalled by the silence, he rose with his wig awry, and trotted—he always trotted when he was tipsy—home to his wife.

CHAPTER V.

MRS. FALCONER.

MEANTIME Robert was seated with his grandmother at the little dark mahogany table, in which the lamp, shaded towards his grandmother's side, shone brilliantly reflected. Her face being thus in the shadow, he could not see the keen look of stern benevolence with which she, knowing that he could not see it, regarded him as he ate his thick oat cake of Betty's skilled manufacture, well loaded with the sweetest butter, and drank the tea which she had poured out and sugared for him with liberal hand. It was such a comfortable little room, that, with its inlaid mahogany chairs and ancient couch, covered with horsehair! A shepherdess and lamb, worked in silks whose brilliance had now faded halfway to neutrality, hung in a black frame, with brass rosettes at the corners, over the chimney-piece—the sole approach to the luxury of art in the homely little place. Besides the muslin stretched across the lower part of the window, no curtains defended it. There was no cat in the room, nor was there one in the kitchen even; for Mrs. Falconer had such a respect for humanity that she grudged every morsel consumed by the lower creation. She sat in one of the arm-chairs of the time, leaning back in contemplation of her grandson.

She was a handsome old lady—little, but had once been taller, for she was more than seventy now. She wore a plain cap of muslin, lying close to her face, and bordered a little way from the edge with a broad black ribbon, which went round her face, and then, turning at right angles, went round the back of her neck too. Her gray hair peeped a little way from under this cap. A clear but short-sighted eye of a light hazel shone under a smooth thoughtful forehead; a straight and well-elevated, but rather short nose, which left the firm upper lip long and capable of expressing a world of dignified offence, rose over a well-formed mouth, revealing more moral than temperamental sweetness; while the chin was rather deficient than otherwise, and took little share in indicating the remarkable character possessed by the old lady.

After gazing at Robert for some time from behind the shade of her lamp, she took a piece of oat cake from the plate by her side, the only luxury in which she indulged, for it was made with cream instead of water—but it was very little she ate of anything—and held it out to Robert in a hand white, soft, and smooth, but with square finger tips and squat though pearly nails. Robert received it with a “thank you, grannie;” and when he thought she did not see him, slipped it under the table and into his pocket. But she saw him well enough, and although she would not condescend to ask him why he put it away instead of eating it, it cost her two hours of sleep that night, thinking what could have been his reason for so doing. She would always be at the bottom of a thing if reflection could reach it, but she generally declined taking the most ordinary measures to expedite the process.

When Robert had finished his tea, instead of rising to get his books and betake himself to his lessons, in regard to which his grandmother had seldom any cause to complain, although she would have considered herself guilty of high treason against the boy's future if she had allowed herself once to acknowledge as much, he drew his chair towards the fire, and said :

"Grandmamma."

"He's gaein' to tell me something," said Mrs. Falconer to herself. "Will't be aboot the puir barfut crater they ca' Shargar, or will't be aboot the piece he pat intil 's pooch?"

"Weel, laddie?" she said aloud, willing to encourage him.

"Is 't true that my grandfather was the blin' piper o' Portcloddie?"

"Ay, laddie; true eneuch. Hoots na; nae yer grandfather, but yer father's grandfather, laddie—my husband's father."

"Hoo cam' that aboot?"

"Weel, ye see, he was oot i' the Forty-five; and efter the battle o' Culloden, he had to rin for't. And for ooks (*weeks*) he had to hide amo' the rocks. And they tuik a' his property frae him. It wasna muckle—a wheen hooses, and a kailyard or twa, wi' a bit fairmy on the tap o' a cauld hill near the seashore; but it was eneuch and to spare; and whan they tuik it frae him, he had naething left i' the warl' but his sons. Yer grandfather was born the verra day o' the battle, and the verra day 'at the news cam', the mother died. But yer great-grandfather wasna lang or he merried anither wife. He was sic a man as ony woman micht hae been prood to merry. I saw him first mysel' whan I was aboot twenty—that was jist the year afore I was merried. He was a gey (*considerably*) auld man then, but as straucht as an ellwand, and jist poorefu beyon' belief. His shackle-bane (*wrist*) was as thick as baith mine; and years and years efter that, whan he tuik his son, my husband, and his grandson, my Anerew——"

"What ails ye, grannie? What for dinna ye gang on wi' the story?"

After a somewhat lengthened pause, Mrs. Falconer resumed as if she had not stopped at all.

"Ane in ilka han', jist for the fun o' 't, he kneipit their heids thegither, as gin they hed been twa carldoddies (*stalks of rib-grass*). But maybe it was the lauchin' o' the twa lads, for they thoct it unco fun. They were maist killed wi' lauchin'. But the last time the puir auld man, hostit (*coughed*) sair efterhin, and had to gang and lie doon. He didna live lang efter that. But it wasna that 'at killed him, ye ken."

"But hoo cam' he to play the pipes?"

"He likit the pipes. And yer grandfather, he tuik to the fiddle."

"But what for did they ca' him the blin' piper o' Portcloddie?"

"Because he turned blin' lang afore his en' cam'. And there was naething ither he culd do. And he wad aye mak' an honest baubee whan he culd; for siller was fell scarce at that time o' day amo' the Falconers. Sae he gae'd doon the toon at five o'clock ilka mornin' playin' his pipes, to lat them 'at war up ken they war up in time, and them 'at warn't that it was time to rise. And syne he played them again aboot aucht o'clock at nicht, to let them ken

'at it was time for dacent fowk to gang to their beds. Ye see, there wasna sae mony clocks and watches by half than as there is noo."

"Was he a gude piper, grannie?"

"What for speir ye that?"

"Because I tauld that sunk, Lumley——"

"Ca' naebody names," Robert. But what richt had ye ty be speillkin' to a man like that?"

"He spak to me first."

"Whaur saw ye him?"

"At the Boar's Heid."

"And what richt had ye to gang stan'in' aboot? Ye oucht to ha' gane in at ance."

"There was a half-dizzen o' fowk stan'in' aboot, and I bude (*behooved*) to speik whan I was spoken till."

"But ye budena stop an' mak' ae fule mair."

"Isna that ca'in' names, grandmither?"

"Deed, laddie, I doobt ye hae me there. But what said the fallow Lumley to ye?"

"He cast it up to me that my grandfather was naething but a blin' piper."

"And what said ye?"

"I daured him to say 'at he didna pipe weel."

"Weel dune, laddie! And ye nicht say't wi' a gude conscience, for he wadna hae been piper till's regiment at the battle o' Culloden gin he hadna pipit weel. Yon's his kilt hingin' up i' the press i' the garret. Ye'll hae to grow, Robert, my man, afore ye fill that."

"And whase was that blue coat wi' the bonny gowd buttons upo' 't?" asked Robert, who thought he had discovered a new approach to an impregnable hold of information, which he would gladly storm if he could.

"Lat the coat sit. What has that to do wi' the kilt? A blue coat and a tartan kilt gang na weel thegither."

This she said apparently for the sake of saying something and turning the current of the conversation. But Robert had inherited a little of her own persistency.

"Excep' in an auld press whaur naebody sees them. Ye wadna care, grannie, wad ye, gin I was to cut aff the bonnie buttons?"

"Dinna lay a finger upo' them. Ye wad be gaein' playin' at pitch and toss or ither sic ploys wi' them. Na, na, lat them sit."

"I wad only niffer them for bools" (*exchange them for marbles*).

"I daur ye to touch the coat or onything 'ither that's in that press."

"Weel, weel, grannie. I s' gang and get my lessons for the morn."

"It's time, laddie. Ye hae been jabberin' ower muckle. Tell Betty to come and tak' awa' the taythings."

Robert went to the kitchen, got a couple of hot potatoes and a candle, and went upstairs to Shargar, whom he found fast asleep. But the moment the light shone upon his face, he started up, with his eyes, if not his senses, wide awake.

"It wasna me, mither! I tell ye it wasna me!"

And he covered his head with both arms, as if to defend it from a shower of blows.

"Haud yer tongue, Shargar. It's me."

— But before Shargar came to his senses, the light of the candle falling upon the blue coat, made the buttons flash confused suspicions into his mind.

"Mither, mither," he said, "ye hae gane ower far this time. There's ower mony o' them, and they's no the safe colour. We'll be baith hangt, as sure's there's a deevil in hell."

And so saying, he tried to pick the buttons from the coat, taking them for sovereigns, though how he could have seen a sovereign at that time in Scotland I can only conjecture. But Robert caught him by the shoulders, and shook him awake with no gentle hand. He began to rub his eyes, and to mutter sleepily:

"Is that you, Bob? I hae been dreamin', I doobt."

"Gin ye dinna learn to dream quaieter, ye'll get you and me too into mair trouble nor I care to hae aboot ye, ye rascal. Haud the tongue o' ye, and eat this tawtie, gin ye want onything mair. And here's a bit o' reamy cakes tu ye. Ye winna get that in ilka hoose i' the toon. It's my grannie's especial."

Robert felt relieved after this, for he had eaten all the cakes Miss Napier had given him, and had had a pain in his conscience ever since.

"Hoo got ye a haud o' 't?" asked Shargar, evidently supposing he had stolen it.

"She gies me a bit noo and than."

"And ye didna eat it yersel'? Eh, Bob!"

Shargar was somewhat overpowered at this fresh proof of Robert's friendship. But Robert was still more ashamed of what he had not done.

He took the blue coat carefully from the bed, and hung it in its place again, satisfied now, from the way his grannie had spoken, or, rather, would not speak, about it, that it had belonged to his father.

"Am I to rise?" asked Shargar, not understanding the action.

"Na, na; lie still. I'll lat ye oot i' the mornin' afore grannie's up. And ye maun mak' the best o't efter that till it's dark again. We'll saddle a' aboot that at the schuil the morn."

"Ye culdna lay yer han's upo' a drap o' whusky, culd ye, Bob?"

Robert stared in horror. A boy like that asking for whisky! and in his grandmother's house, too!

"Shargar," he said, solemnly, "there's no a drap o' whusky i' this hoose. It's awfu' to hear ye mention sic a thing. My grannie wad smell the verra name o' 't a mile awa'. I doobt that's her fit upo' the stair a'ready."

Robert crept to the door, and Shargar sat staring with horror, his eyes looking from the gloom of the bed like those of a half-strangled dog. But it was a false alarm, as Robert presently returned to announce.

"Gin ever ye sae muckle as mention whusky again, no to say drink ae drap o' 't, you and me pairs company, and that I tell *you*, Shargar," said he, emphatically.

"I'll never luik at it; I'll never min't at dreamin' o' 't," answered Shargar,

coweringly. "Gin she pits't intil my mou', I'll spit it oot. But gin ye strive wi' me, Bob, I'll cut my throat—I will; an' that 'll be seen and heard tell o'."

All this time, save during the alarm of Mrs. Falconer's approach, when he sat with a mouthful of hot potato, unable to move his jaws for terror, and the remnant arrested half way in its progress from his mouth after the bite—all this time Shargar had been devouring the provisions Robert had brought him, as if he had not seen food that day. As soon as they were finished, he begged for a drink of water, which Robert managed to procure for him, and then left him for the night. For his longer absence might have brought his grandmother after him, who had perhaps only too good reasons for being doubtful, if not suspicious, about boys in general, though certainly not about Robert in particular. He carried with him his books from the other garret room where he kept them, and sat down at the table by his grandmother, preparing his Latin and geography by her lamp, while she sat knitting a white stocking with fingers rapid as thought, never looking at her work, but staring into the fire, and seeing visions there which Robert would have given everything he could call his own to see, and then would have given his life to blot out again if he had seen them. Quietly the evening passed by, the peaceful lamp and the cheerful fire, with the Latin on the one side of the table and the stocking on the other, as if ripe and purified old age and hopeful unstained youth had been the only forms of humanity known to the world. But the bitter wind was howling by fits in the chimney, and the offspring of a gentleman and a gipsy lay asleep in the garret, covered with the cloak of an old Highland rebel, and the abandoned garments of the son of the woman and father of the boy.

At nine o'clock, Mrs. Falconer rang the bell for Betty, and they had *worship*. Robert read a chapter, and his grandmother prayed an extempore prayer, in which they that looked at the wine when it was red in the cup, and they that worshipped the women clothed in scarlet and seated upon the seven hills, came in for a strange mixture in which the vengeance yielded only to the pity.

"Lord, lead them to see the error of their ways," she said. "Let the rod of thy wrath awake the worm of their conscience, that they may know verily that there is a God that ruleth in the earth."

As soon as prayers were over, Robert had a tumbler of milk and some more oatcake, and was sent to bed; after which it was impossible for him to hold any further communication with Shargar. For his grandmother, little as one might suspect it who entered the parlour in the daytime, always slept in that same room, in a bed closed in with doors like those of a large press in the wall, while Robert slept in a little closet, looking into a garden at the back of the house, the door of which opened from the parlour close to the head of his grandmother's bed. It was just large enough to hold a good-sized bed with curtains, a chest of drawers, an *escritoire*, a large eight-day clock, and one chair, leaving in the centre about four feet square for him to move about in. There was more room as well as more comfort in bed, especially seeing he was never allowed a candle. Light enough came through from the parlour, his grandmother thought. So he was soon extended between the

whitest and something the coldest of sheets, with his knees up to his chin, and his thoughts following his lost father over all spaces of the earth which his geography book had made him acquainted with.

He was in the habit of leaving his closet and creeping through his grandmother's room before she was awake, or, at least before she had given signs to the small household that she was restored to consciousness, and that the life of the house must proceed. He therefore found no difficulty in liberating Shargar from his prison, except what arose from the boy's own unwillingness to forsake his comfortable quarters for the fierce encounter of the January blast which waited him. Robert did not turn him out before the last moment of safety had arrived, but, by the aid of signs known to himself, watched the progress of his grandmother's dressing—an operation which did not consume much of the morning, scrupulous as she was with regard to neatness and cleanliness. When Betty was in the parlour giving her careful assistance to the final disposition of the *match*, his exit could be delayed no longer with safety, and Robert ran to the foot of the stair and called in a keen whisper :

“Noo, Shargar, cut for the life o' ye.”

And down came the poor fellow, with long gliding steps, ragged and reluctant, and, without a word or a look, launched himself out into the cold, and sped away he knew not whither. As he left the door, the only suspicion of light to be had was the dull and doubtful shimmer of the snow that covered the street, keen particles of which were blown in poor Shargar's face by the wind, which, having been up all night, had grown very cold, and seemed delighted to find one unprotected human being whom it might badger at its own bitter will. Where he spent the interval between Mrs. Falconer's door and that of the school, I do not know. There was a report amongst his schoolfellows that he had been found by Scroggie, the fish-cadger, lying at full length upon the back of his old horse, who, either from compassion or indifference, had not cared to rise up under the burden. They said likewise that, when accused by Scroggie of house-breaking, though nothing had to be broken to get in, only a string with a peculiar knot, on the invention of which the cadger prided himself, to be undone, all that Shargar had to say in his self-defence was, that he had a terrible sair wame, and the horse was warmer nor the stanes i' the yard ; and he had dune him nae ill, nae even drawn a hair frae his tail—which would have been a difficult feat, seeing the horse's tail was as bare as his hoof.



THE KNIGHT-ERRANT OF ARDEN.

“— and loves to live i' the sun.”

A HORSEMAN rode by mere and lea,
Through howm and forest wide;
And ne'er sought he more companie
Than the dazzling sunlight, glancing free
On the mantle by his side.

He crossed a stretch of bosky brae,
Where broom and whin and heather
In floods of fairest blossom lay;
Where sky, and air, and earth alway
Blazed goldenly together.

Up to the sun he turned his gaze,
As back his head he flung,
And glimmering with half-shut eyes at the rays
Of light that shone, but did not daze,
He, ambling, gladsome sung:—

“I ride with the shadows of cloudlets along—
Lulla foo tarara dai;
I live the bright summer-day sunshine among—
Lulla foo tarara dai.

“I wander to many a far countree—
Lulla foo tarara dai;
Ever the emerant leafage I see,
Ever the cuckoo chanteth to me—
Lulla foo tarara dai.

“I follow the sunlight for ever and aye—
Lulla foo tarara dai;
Nor before me, behind me, nor yet by the way,
Can anything whatso beguile me to stay—
Lulla foo tarara dai.

“I roam with delight on the billowy lea;
Wild gallops my blood at the deep sounding sea—
Lulla foo tarara dai;
But here, among heather, the whin, and the broom,
I gaze on a world of gold and perfume,
And am wild with a joy that will never consume—
Lulla foo tarara dai,

"The sunlight—the sunlight's for ever my life—
 Lulla foo tarara dai;
 The sunlight's my brother; the sunlight's my wife;
 With love and good cheer, and gladness aye rife—
 Lulla foo tarara dai;
 In its thrilling delight I ever would be;
 The sunlight for ever; the sunlight for me—
 Lulla foo tarara dai."

His face was radiant while he sang—
 As he'd drunk gladness in,—
 And still on the winds his song he flung,
 Till his music through the broom knolls rung,
 And nestled in the whin.

And when he had gained the furthest knoll,
 His head still backward flung,
 And his mantle had given its farewell roll,
 He poured the joy of his jubilant soul,
 For still on the wind he sung:—
 "In its thrilling delight I ever would be;
 The sunlight for ever; the sunlight for me—
 Lulla foo tarara dai."

JAMES LESLIE.

HOW THEY OPENED THE SESSION AT "GUY'S."

BY A DUTCH PAINTER.

I HAVE ever entertained a great respect for the medical profession, but even although I had not, what I saw and heard at the last annual opening of Guy's Medical School would have taught me to respect it. I do not now speak so much of the lecture then delivered, though it was able and full of practical wisdom, as 'of the circumstances under which it was delivered, and the whole attendant ceremonies. I used to think that medical science, from its very nature, was a prosaic, cut-and-dry sort of thing, and that generally speaking there was about as much æsthetic sense in a medical man as there is poetry in a butcher. Nor do I think any one could have reasonably found fault with me for this. If you only consider what a medical man, of any lengthened practice, has had to go through, you will be compelled to admit that nothing could be better calculated to squeeze all poetry out of him; and that there is no occupation, or employment, which, so far as æsthetic training is concerned, treats its followers in such a stepmotherly way as does the medical profession. For we all know, from experience, that the development of our sense of the beautiful depends upon the impressions produced by the outer world upon our minds through the medium of the senses.

This, too, has been asserted by philosophers of all ages, tribes, and tongues. But I ask any one who has ever found himself under the necessity of sending for a doctor, or who has visited an hospital, or only had to dash into a surgery to get a wicked tooth extracted, what must be the impressions which the outer world, from dawn till dusk and from dusk till dawn, is constantly producing upon the eyes, the ears, and the olfactory organs of a son of Æsculapius. He, poor fellow, never beholds the world in its Sunday dress. Mankind never approaches him but in bed or with something that is out of order, or broken, or disfigured. The most beautiful woman presents an ugly face to him; the most accomplished singer only calls for him when he has made up his mind not to sing, but to groan, squeak, or perhaps scream. The most sublime poet only comes to him to speak about things which even the coarsest prosaist would deem too prosaic to repeat to anybody else. As for a lovely smile, he scarce knows what it is. He never witnesses it, except perhaps at the moment when people see some chance of getting rid of him. He sees few human faces save such as are either pale as a sheet or crimson as a boiled lobster.

Now no one who possesses common sense enough to be able to draw an inference, will wonder at me when I tell him that I always supposed that individuals who by the inevitable course of circumstances, were placed under the power of such impressions, must have lost all perception of the beautiful, the poetical, the melodious. So one may picture my delighted surprise when, upon entering the anatomical lecture-room at Guy's, about the hour advertised for the opening lecture, I found exactly the contrary of all this to be true. I observed that everything, from the attitude of the imposing audience that crowded the hall, down to the movement of every limb, stick, or cane, was arranged with the most artistic taste and skill, and with so much sense of what was in keeping with the occasion, that I thought one of the first geniuses in the art of ceremony must have arranged the programme, and that weeks must have been spent in careful rehearsals. Yet, much to my astonishment, I was assured that no such thing as a programme had ever been arranged, and that all I saw was only the natural expression of the innate sense of propriety, which dwelt in and, so to speak, instinctively moved each member of the wonderful company of medical students. I was lost in surprise at the sight. What an astounding power of æsthetic life, I thought, must dwell in the inner chambers of a science which, despite its frequent contact with a groaning, weeping, and contorted world, was able to inspire its students, at their very entrance into its sanctuary, with such an unparalleled sense of the beautiful, the orderly, the truly symbolic!

I say *the truly symbolic*. I never in my life witnessed such a wonderful display of symbolic skill as I was permitted to enjoy in Guy's anatomical lecture-room. All men versed in the science of the beautiful, all poets, all painters, all sculptors—in short, all *connoisseurs* agree that the highest development of art and poetry is the symbolic art. In that art thought and matter meet in most intimate union. Nowhere else does spirit so completely manifest its mastery over matter, or matter so wonderfully adapt itself to the images which are conjured up from the depths of the creative faculties, to be

the visible embodiment of the invisible idea. It is well known that poetry, true poetry, lives, thinks, and moves in symbols. It is well known, too, that no picture, though drawn ever so skilfully *ad naturam*, deserves the name of an artistic production, if it does not symbolise some ruling idea, far superior to what the eye can see or the hand can grasp, which idea the genius of the artist, with its magic power, placed clear before his mind. Where, if we take a wide survey of the history of mankind, do we meet with the finest, the most expressive, the most sublimely conceived symbols? In the first ages, when mankind were still children, when the visible creation that surrounded them was still one great poem, one grand harmonious symphony; when, in fact, every man was a poet, and saw everywhere sublime ideas expressed in the visible, and heard mysterious tones whispering down to him through the audible,—everything which in those days proceeded from him was symbolic. His religion teemed with symbols. His very speech was symbolic; so also was the way in which he built his house, dressed his body, and cooked his dinner. Our present age, our matter-of-fact age, our age of pounds, shillings, and pence—of cold logic and cutting criticism; our age which makes creation, looked down upon with a bird's eye, like a shapeless monster wrapped in a steel crinoline; our age knows nothing of the poetical sense of our unsophisticated ancestors, those children of nature. But there are a chosen few still left to us, in whose bosoms that sublime fire has been preserved, and who figure in the midst of the present dead level of humanity like oases in a desert, or like statues left here and there amid the ruins of a destroyed city. These are our true artists, our genuine poets and composers, who give forth the sublime treasures of their genius in masterpieces of inspired conception. To them it is impossible not to symbolise. The true architect cannot, except with disgust, set down for you a square box called a house, with a hole in it called a door, and a few other holes called windows. He wants first to know who you are, and then he sits down and draws a plan of a house, such as will be in keeping with your person, character, profession, and station in life; and when you allow him to work it out, you will observe that the very door of the dwelling, its shape and ornaments, the form of the lobby, of the ceiling, &c., &c., express some attribute or property of the living being who is to dwell in it as a soul dwells in a body. A well-instructed observer, when he comes into your house, will, at a glance, from what he sees about him, learn what sort of person you are, what your object in life is, and what spirit the other apartments of the house will express. So the very entrance of your mansion, in brick and mortar, becomes symbolic of *you*, who are to be the living, moving, and ruling centre of the whole. It will at the same time, and, as it were, *in nuce*, contain a summary or conspectus of the whole house, just as the image in a *camera obscura* represents an entire landscape within the compass of a few inches' diameter. In the same way a true composer never sends an oratorio or an opera into the world without prefixing to it an overture, in which the whole plan of the masterpiece is symbolically and symmetrically expressed within a narrow compass, so that you discover the spirit and purport of the whole, and even hear the main thoughts, the leading melodies and ruling harmonies which will be worked out in the great musical performance.

Now everybody must see that extraordinary genius and artistic skill are required thus to contract the image of a grand work within the dimensions of a miniature drawing. Yet if ever such genius and skill were exhibited, if ever a talent for symbolising the whole in the narrow compass of its introductory part was displayed, it was on the memorable day when Guy's Medical School was opened this year. First, my attention was drawn to the fact that the introduction or overture to the great medical opera which was to be performed during the ensuing year, was given in the *anatomical* lecture-room. What a grand and all-important truth was here symbolised! Anatomy is the basis of all true hygiene. This truth rests upon the undeniable fact, that whatever may be the differences between man and man when looked at from the outside, inside they are all alike, rich and poor, king and beggar. Having cut up your brother, the medical man knows precisely how you would look if cut up. This knowledge is the first thing required in order to be able to put you right again should you get out of sorts; for you are just like a musical box, full of all kinds of instruments, large and small, and if, instead of producing a tune, you utter screams or groans, how would it be possible to make you sing again, if it were not known how the springs and pipes and levers inside were put together? So anatomy is the foundation of the medical art, and it was an evidence of the artistic tact of the directors of Guy's, to begin their course of medical performances in the anatomical hall.

A young man with whom I happened to enter the gate of the hospital did, however, express his fear that the room would prove rather small for the crowd who were expected, unless they were crammed and crushed together like the proverbial "herrings in a barrel;" whereas there were plenty of large rooms in the vast establishment, which might accommodate even double the number. I deemed this prosaic observation wholly unworthy of a reply. I put down the speaker for a drover, accustomed to dispose of the whole area of a road for only a few head of cattle. Surely he had never studied anatomy, else he would have known that the capacity of being squeezed into a narrow compass is a peculiarity of the human frame; a property of which it was quite right that the most convincing proof should be given on this occasion. And, indeed, nothing was neglected for the accomplishment of this end. The room, which is filled with benches running up from the centre in an amphitheatrical form, is surrounded by a gallery which is so narrow that only two rows of persons can find room to stand comfortably, the one behind the other. On the present occasion, however, it was shown that owing to the wonderful elasticity and pliability of the human frame, four or five rows of persons could be located in that place, and that they could even in that narrow compass find room for giving athletic, acrobatic, and pugilistic representations, which were carried on with so much spirit, that I was often afraid the railing would give way, and the adventurous performers come down upon us. There is an old Etrurian myth which tells of a grotto which had for centuries been used as a dancing saloon by the nymphs and sylphs of the district, and that after having been abandoned by them, it still retained such a power over those who went within its walls, that they were at once compelled to begin dancing.

Some similar spell appeared to reside in the galleries of this anatomical hall, for everybody I saw in them was trying to anatomize his neighbour, or at the very least his coat or hat; such, indeed, was the power of the anatomical mania, that a person with both his hands caught hold of a window which had evidently been recently put in, and broke it to pieces, to enable another person who was standing outside to get a view of the anatomical performances which were being carried on within.

Now before I had entered this wonderful room, I was kindly accosted by a person, who to all appearance belonged to the medical profession, and was well acquainted with the place and its customs. "As I suppose, sir, that you are a stranger here," he said to me, "and perhaps do not know the order which, according to the rules of the symbolic art, every medical student instinctively feels himself led to observe, when he finds himself in the anatomical room on an occasion like this, I take the liberty of suggesting that it would perhaps be as well for you to take off your hat before you enter the place, as you might otherwise get it knocked off by a stick or cane; unless, indeed, you are bent on having it honoured with anatomical treatment. You must know that as man comes into the world head foremost, so it is a rule in medical science that anatomy should begin at the head; and as this fundamental principle ought to have its due expression in the present introductory ceremonies, you will find it is only consistent with true artistic feeling, that immediately on stepping over the threshold, every one's hat should be taken under cognisance and manipulation, as being the best substitute for his head." Now, artist though I be, I could not rejoice at the prospect of my good hat getting such indelible symbolic marks, so I took it off at once. Having stepped in, I found myself right under the gallery, which was so low, that those who were in it could easily reach with their sticks the hats of persons passing underneath. It was not, therefore, by any means an easy matter to get from under the gallery to a seat in the body of the room, without coming into contact with the sticks and canes, which in incessant and rapid succession were being directed at every one who ventured to pass the Rubicon. However, with a desperate resolution, and by aid of stooping as low as I could, I succeeded in getting through, and dashed to an unoccupied seat on one of the benches.

As the loud noise which inevitably accompanied these performances prevented one from hearing even his own voice, let alone any other body's, I was left to my own meditations, and I had thus an opportunity of quietly observing the effect which these admirable proceedings produced upon the visitors. Indeed an enthusiastic student of anatomy could learn here a great many interesting facts. First, there was the remarkable power of reaction with which the human system is endowed, showing itself in this, that when from an elevated position, one strikes a man by applying a stick to his hat, immediately the left arm is thrown out to protect it, while the right hand is stretched upward to try to catch hold of the stick, and, if possible, to pull the offender down. Then there was an exhibition of the wonderful capacities of the human hand, and of its capabilities of moving its fingers in such a variety of directions, that, if thrust inside a crushed hat, they at once take their position so as to press out again the various indentations made by the symbolical stick.

But, above all, it was interesting and instructive to notice the effect which this scientific and artistic operation produced upon the nerves and muscles of the human face. Just opposite to me sat a man whose hat had been brought into such a condition as to symbolically represent a complete dislocation or dismemberment. He was expressing his feelings to another man who stood in the passage close to him, and was apparently one of the officials of the place. What he said I could not, of course, understand, but I noticed that his face was now pale, then crimson, now purple, and then pale again. His fists were spasmodically clenched; the muscles of his mouth were sourly contracted; his under lip was curled down to the bottom of his chin, and his eyes every now and then glared up to the gallery with a look which, had it come from Jupiter's eyes, would have burnt all the occupants of that elevated place to ashes. For the sake of contrast it was very interesting to notice the face of the official to whom he was speaking. He listened with an open mouth to the gentleman's passionate words, sometimes looked up with awe at the symbolical hat, sometimes shook his head with an expression of indignation, sometimes shrugged his shoulders as if from a sense of his inability to do anything in the matter; and finally turned away from the gentleman and burst out into a loud laugh.

After I had thus, for about half an hour, observed the proceedings of this wonderful company, the lecturer, a venerable grey-headed gentleman, entered, followed by about a dozen other gentlemen, who, as I was informed, were most of them doctors connected with the hospital, or teachers of the students. The noise which had hitherto been sounding in our ears like thunder, now rose to such a height as to threaten to burst my tympanum. A complete exhibition was given of all the various sounds which the human organs are capable of producing. As the venerable lecturer took his stand at the desk, and the doctors and teachers seated themselves by his side or behind him, some one in the gallery, according to the instinctive programme, threw down a handful of little paper pellets, which fell like a shower partly upon the noble band of learned men, and partly upon the audience; while others at the same time showered down sugar-beans or other little missiles with a rattling noise upon benches and desks. That this ingenious, tasteful, and delicate way of receiving and hailing the long-expected lecturer and his learned retinue meant to symbolise the high admiration and sweet tender feelings which the students cherished towards them was made clear to everybody of the least discernment.

The lecturer having produced his manuscript from his pocket, and the doctors having assumed the attitude of listeners, I expected the deafening noise to subside at once and give place to a dead calm. The contrary, however, was the case. The noise not only continued unabated, but if possible increased. I asked a person who was sitting next me what this meant, whereupon he replied that as the doctors were to be the *active* party during the anatomical performances of the year, it was only just and in accordance with the rules of the symbolical art, that during the introductory process they should take a *passive* part, by which they were to be symbolically anatomised before proceeding actually to anatomise others; and that at the same time they should exhibit the benefits which anatomical science bestows upon those

who practise it, by showing themselves able to exercise perfect control over their own nerves and muscles, despite all efforts of others to put them out of temper. And, indeed, it was wonderful to witness the amazing power of self-control these noble and learned men displayed in going through that unpleasant process. For more than a quarter of an hour the din and roar continued. Ten times the lecturer tried to commence his speech, and ten times he was compelled to give it up. There was no end of hissing, and whistling, and shouting, and clapping of hands, and stamping of feet. Shutting my eyes for a while, I fancied myself in the temple of the Philistines at the moment when Samson pulled down the pillars. And yet, in the midst of all this uproar, the lecturer and the doctors moved not a muscle of their faces, nor showed the slightest sign of uneasiness, but realised, in their perfect composure, the sublime idea which was so vividly present to the mind of the Latin poet, when he sang:—

"Justum ac tenacem propositi virum
Nec civium ardor prava jubentium
Nec vultus enstantis tyranni,
Mente quatit solidâ."

It was really wonderful. At length a common hissing ensued, which was the signal for closing this part of the symbolical performance.

The lecturer now commenced to read his able address. I should be justly accused of prolixity, were I to attempt even to give an epitome of it. Suffice it to say that we were all ear, and listened with breathless attention. A dead calm reigned throughout the place, which made us feel as though we had been suddenly transported from the roar and rage of a tempest into the stillness of a charming summer day. Gently and melodiously the lecturer's speech flowed on, like a calm streamlet gliding onward smoothly between its solitary banks. But when in the course of his address he had arrived at some useful observations about "the benefits of early rising, especially for students," the symbolical programme seemed to require a fresh performance. No sooner had the venerable orator uttered the words "early rising," than the crowing of a cock, shrill and sharp, was heard from the gallery, and with such perfection of imitation, that had I not known for certain that I was in an assembly of scientific men, I should have believed myself transported by some magic means to a poultry yard. The deception was so amazing, and the application of this unexpected gallinaceous *accompaniment* so felicitous, that it drew forth general applause and roars of laughter, which compelled the lecturer to stop for a considerable time.

At length, quiet having been restored, we were again permitted to enjoy the eloquence of the orator for a few minutes. But only for a few minutes; for as he began to recommend to his hearers the virtues of gentleness and sympathy while engaged in treating their patients, and to warn them against that coarse and rude deportment which in former days often disgraced the character of medical men, suddenly the deep, hollow bark of a bull-dog sounded down from the gallery. This was immediately responded to from the opposite side by the high pitched sound of a yelping lap-dog, whereupon a general exhibition followed of a fight between the various species of the

canine race accompanied by all the barking, yelping, howling, and growling of which this portion of the animal creation is capable. The effect was so deceptive that I opened my eyes to twice their usual dimensions and looked round with the utmost attention to persuade myself that I was not on a sudden transplanted into the dog-show at Islington, or into Canita's temple. The magic spell which this symbol cast upon the audience, was such that every one burst out into spasmodic laughter except the lecturer and the doctors, who, though not without an evident struggle, kept the muscles of their faces in due constraint.

Many other symbols were exhibited which the space allotted to me will not allow me to describe. When at length the lecturer had closed his address, there was a general exhibition of the various movements of which the human muscles are capable. Above all, one student excelled in beating with his cane the desk before which he sat, thus producing such a frightful noise, that many of us, whose nerves were not prepared for such an anatomical operation upon the tympanum, walked away holding our fingers in our ears, and thanking heaven that we had arrived safe outside the building.

If you wish to see the perfection the present age has attained in the combining of art, science, and practice, you must go to Guy's next October. And should you still foolishly suppose that there is no sense of the beautiful, the poetical, or the sublime in a medical man, go to Guy's, I entreat you, that you may at once and for ever be cured of your absurd mistake.



THE ART OF GROWING OLD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

IT is something to be lamented that amid the many rules and fashions that govern the habits of men, some code is not enforced as to the manner of growing old becomingly. Philosophers, sages, and essayists have each treated upon "Old Age" and its consequences; but hardly in a satisfactory manner as to the duties it owes itself.

"Old Age," in theory, demands respect, veneration, and even admiration.

"Old Age," in reality, suffers contempt, ridicule, and neglect. We are all as ready to bind ourselves to the theory as we find ourselves forswearing it in reality.

Is the theory in fault, or the reality, that we find our actions so belie our judgment?

In replying to this question, it is much to be feared that we bring "Old Age" into disrepute ourselves. Either it comes upon us unawares, before we are prepared to wear it properly, or we are so disgusted with it when it does arrive, we are at no pains to conceal our own contempt for it. Moreover there are many instances where the body becomes old before the heart—where the springs of the mind are more fresh than the sinews of the frame. In short, it may be asserted as fact that few wear "Old Age" gracefully, and none do so willingly.

And yet what a beautiful thing is beautiful old age. How admirable when a kind and tender heart, still hopeful and sympathizing, is united to the white hairs of experience—the faltering steps of a closing life.

And how seldom we meet with this.

In almost all momentous actions of life, men are very much under the influence of the future. They desire to have it said they have done well, generously, nobly; they hope that the action just passed will have a fragrance of praise about it, ever associated with their name. In the full vigour of intellect and life, when every hour has its duties, and its pleasures, they yet pause to think if they are doing well, not only for the present time, but for the future.

But when old age steals upon them, with its torpid spirit, its vain regrets, its infirmity of temper, all the good deeds of youth, the generous actions, the noble aspirations, the actual virtues, become forgotten or absorbed in the daily annoyances caused by a temper that will not, does not, chuse to grow old.

The name so honoured, so beloved, is now mentioned with pity; it is well if it escapes contempt. He who thought so much of his fellows, of his neighbours, of his duties, has forgotten them all in the querulous desire not to grow old. He forgets that men will remember him as he left them, and not with the halo he gained for his name in his youth and prime. The petty worries he inflicts and vexatious trouble that he gives, will in good minds cause his death to be regarded as a merciful release, and in selfish hearts a happy riddance. And all this will occur to a beloved and inestimable

person, simply because among all his efforts for the future, he has not taken into consideration the art of growing old. This is merely considering the subject as regards our leaving the world decently mourned and regretted.

But the mischief we do ourselves while we are living, struggling to keep a place in the world to which we are losing our right, is much more weighty. In a man, the first symptoms of old age do not wound his vanity so much as his pride. He who has ruled, with honour and credit, discovers that grey hairs are signs of obsolete habits, and that the rising generation may respect the one, but laugh at the other. It requires good common sense, and a large fine heart, to bear with temper that sort of constant "tripping up," which the young ones hurrying on to keep ahead of their own companions, will inflict upon those just before them.

To step aside good-humouredly and let them push on, is truly a brave act, especially when one feels that the wisdom and experience one has gained and stored is vastly superior to the 'pride and vain-glory of youth. But when we were young we did precisely the same thing. The old fogies—our fathers—were a very slow set. We are now the old fogies, and we seem a still slower set; and doubtless we are. For this is a very fast age in every way.

Often have we heard our fathers say:—"Ah! very different times now to when we were young: the young men of these days can't be compared to us—a foppish, luxuriant, empty-headed, effeminate lot."

And often do we find ourselves railing thus:—"God bless my soul, to see these young rascals, every one, with a jackanapes of a valet after him; can't shoot unless the game is driven to them, or hunt without another horse out, or exert themselves in any way. A parcel of girls—very unlike us, who cared nothing to ride thirty miles to cover, and walked after the partridges from dawn to sunset."

And in their turn these fine young gentlemen will become old fogies, and rail at the doings and ways of their sons. Give these old fogies leave to rail, and perhaps they will gradually sink into old age quietly. A man is sooner consoled than a woman. He has to give up the sports and pastimes of his youth; but if he has a happy fireside, round which rosy grandchildren and loving daughters crowd—giving him, what he scarcely cared for when young, the simple pleasures of home—he will gradually find ample gratification in it. But he must cultivate serenity of mind, and forgetting all his own hopes and wishes, centre his desires upon the future of little Dick, Tom, or Harry—keeping his heart young, and his sympathies kindly for their sakes.

Then in the loving delight of the happy little faces crowding round grandpapa's chair, to hear some of his old stories, he will feel he is not yet useless; and though thrust aside as uncompanionable by the clever fast man of the world, he is yet the centre of a merry circle whom in the merciful dotage accorded him he thinks the happiest he ever experienced.

It is at such times that old age is beautiful: the little, lovely, blooming children clinging to the old parent tree, finding it their chiefest pleasure, and thinking it their greatest honour to minister to his wishes.

Women do not grow old with half the dignity and submission of men. There is a sort of innate admiration for courage and daring that makes men

acknowledge it, when they see it; and there is a brotherhood among them that is rarely warped or biassed by the little tempers and jealousies that women indulge in.

"A man's a man for a' that," expresses effectually the sort of feeling that pervades among them. A man is and always must be the king of a kingdom that was created for him. He deserves from the hands of his fellow-kings a place to move in, and rule his kingdom when his time comes to reign; royalty demands that he should have fair room and no favour. Men rather like to see worthy young kings coming to take their places. And if they don't like it, still justice demands that they have it. It is their due.

But women have no such feeling.

Even grandmamma when, like grandpapa, recalling the past, does not relate the fun and frolics of her youth, without making herself the heroine in all.

"Ah! I was such a beauty then—none of you will ever be like me. I had an offer when I was sixteen, and many a lover of mine has sworn," &c.

The vanity of women is often exemplified in the desire to be of importance. A domestic queen, she rules omnipotently. Confident in herself, she cannot bear the rude shock of having advice from her married daughter; nor can she resign the reins, now too heavy for her feeble hands, to a child who, though middle-aged, has never been married, and governed a house of her own. She must interfere; she is rather deaf, and fancies domestic mishaps are hidden from her; she is irritable, and won't be treated like a child. Her memory fails her, and failure is attributed to those around her, and not to her own waning faculties. This state is a pitiable one. Rarely does the intellect prove sufficiently strong to battle with the growing sense of infirmity. It is accepted as a boon by those around her,—the melancholy crisis of second childhood.

Women who have been beauties find the waning of their charms most mortifying in more ways than one. Hitherto it sufficed to put a blue ribbon in their hair, to robe themselves in fresh white muslin, to care nothing for a rude wind, to be at ease under any disadvantage of place, hour, or toilette; while their plain sisters and companions had to study a becoming style, had to match the best colour for their brown or blowsy complexions, had to be particular about such a wind reddening their noses, too much fire scorching their thin skins, too much daylight exposing their little defects.

It not unfrequently happened that age rather improved the plain woman, or that the constant attention it was necessary for her to pay to a becoming toilette ended in a refined good taste that made up for want of beauty; whereas the beauty had now to take infinite trouble to keep pace with her plain companion. Time is so remorseless with beauty, yellowing the fair skins, wrinkling the brown ones, making watery the blue eyes, and denuding the dark ones of their lashes and softness.

No blue ribbon will now light up the iron grey hair, or hide the bald ragged untidiness of the remains of matchless fair curls.

In vain a wreath of roses is once more tried: it only makes the poor face more old and wrinkled. Useless is soft, white muslin—the contrast is too great with the scraggy throat.

And if joined to these attempts there is a youthful effort at gaiety and giggling, how mournful, how painful is the sight! "Frisky matrons" are already immortalized, girlish old maids are almost as bad.

They go about the world with wistful, mournful glances, which say, "Don't say I am growing old." "Do tell me I am not so much altered." "Am I grown very plain?" "Can you recommend me a new mode of doing my hair? it has become nothing but ends."

Yes, ma'am, we can: brush it well, smooth it down, fasten it up in a knot behind, and cover it with a pretty little cap—snow white—suggestive of ribbons, but not expressively so.

And, ma'am, your dress: a handsome black silk, or brown, or grey, well made—no tassels, beads, or frippery. Velvet for the evening, if you can afford it. And, above everything—pray excuse me, ma'am—a bright, intelligent, contented face, one a little reddened by the constant application of cold water, and the winds of forty winters, but still a fresh genial face, though wrinkled and somewhat square, a face that is sure to reply to pretty niece Fanny when she says, with youthful impertinence, "Why, Aunt Anne, do you mean to say this picture was ever meant for you?"—"Yes, Fanny, taken at sixteen; not considered the least flattered! See what you will come to."

Poor little Fanny; she may think it impossible, but the idea will constantly recur to her, and prepare her to become old becomingly, we will hope.

Sometimes it happens that these beauties have not the strength of mind to bear their position. They have neither the good heart nor the sound judgment to lay aside the rôle of beauty, and take up another in its stead. On the contrary, they withdraw themselves from the world. Envy and regret poison their lives. They have an old servant or two, whose chief occupation is to toady them. They have pet cats and dogs, who love them after the manner of cats and dogs; yet are they weak enough to credit these creatures with more discernment than their fellow-mortals. All beauty is gone out of their lives, and they live the rest of it in so selfish, contemptible, and unprofitable a manner, that they give occasion to scoffers and infidels to say, "The life of man is too long; it sufficeth for any purpose until fifty, after which let it end."

Oh, life, beautiful and matchless life, is it thus you are despised? Only supportable when youth, beauty, and gaiety are your own. Unbearable when grey hairs, age, and infirmities belong to you.

So many years of heaven's best gifts—surely so many years may be well spent in thanking the Giver of them. Grant that mortification, and care, and disappointment, have taken the place of triumph, prosperity, and good fortune, still there is a breathing-time given one to attest the value of it all, unbiassed by the attractions that belong to youth and joy.

Childhood has lingered, as we think, too long. Youth can hardly stay to gather the flowers by its side. The perfection of life finds us eager, rejoicing, grasping; what time have we for anything but to snatch at every happiness within our reach?

And then comes, with a little shock, the first touch of age. Surely 'tis too soon. Let us dye the hair, colour the cheeks, festoon ourselves with roses—

it cannot yet be time to make place for the younger and lovelier. But the dyed hair tells its own tale; the coloured cheeks make more apparent the faded complexion; the light laugh of youth sounds foolishly from dry lips; the pretty nonsense of the young is as so much mockery from toothless jaws.

To waste the remainder of the glorious gift of life in vainly striving to seem what God and Nature forbid, we lose that beautiful fruit-bearing time—the August of life.

Now have we the opportunity to look back on the past. Bitter and painful may be the recollection of much that we have done. The thoughtless drifting into foolish habits; the neglect of signs and warnings, from whence arose mistakes that must sting to the latest breath of life; the welfare of those we loved, whom now we seem to love more than the gay world, has been by us forgotten or disregarded, until their lives, biassed or embittered by our want of thought, by a careless word, by a foolish whim indulged, rises before us, marred and wasted beyond repair.

Is a lifetime too short to endeavour to repair the sins of youth? How much less the quarter of it, left to us! What prayers have we not to utter for forgiveness? What petitions for averting of the evil caused by our own folly to those we love? What beseechings for grace to spend the remainder of our years in a more becoming manner?

Few have reached the age of forty without having their hearts deeply smitten by the remembrances of the sins and offences of their youth. It is well to have a time that by patient perseverance in prayer we can not only regain serenity of mind, but haply see an answer to our prayers in the melting away of those evils we feared we had brought to the best beloved.

Truly these thoughts, this retrospection, cannot fail to add to the grey hairs, wrinkle the brow, and make the heart sadder, and still more sad. But 'tis better than to resort to the hurrying vortex of the world, seeking to bury the remorse that will make itself felt in the pleasures and pastimes for which we are not fitted in appearance, and which we cannot relish as before.

Yet it is not right to retire in a cynical, morbid humour. Rather let us withdraw ourselves, from the sincere wish to reflect on the past, to prepare for the future, and to store our minds with reason and religion. Ever ready to see and converse with those who visit us, always desirous of being gracious and obliging to those who desire our help, cheerful at all times, genial and sympathetic, we may still find in our old age many opportunities to repair the mistakes and thoughtlessness of our youth.

The hand of autumn spreads a wonderful glory of hues and luscious fruit over the world. While we marvel at the beautiful tints, the ground is strewn at our feet with faded leaves. So the autumn of life can shine with glowing and beautiful life, even while strength and beauty are gone from our possession. Bare and unadorned, the trees lift their naked branches to the sky, as if dead and worthless. But within, the sap flows freely, the buds are forming, the tree will burst forth in full beauty. So can the feeble hands fold themselves in prayer, the dim eyes see more of heaven than earth, the heart beat with a pulse generous as that in youth; for their spring in heaven

is drawing near, their glorious clothing of spotless white is preparing, and the crown of glory is awaiting them.

Then shall they no more remember the anguish and pains of old age; then shall they rejoice they were not taken away in the midst of their thoughtless gaiety; then shall they see how God guarded and cared for them, even when most fettered and bound down by the world's chains; and in thanking Him, they will feel most grateful for this best gift—that of old age. Then is the sight of old age beautiful. The strong man, haughty with the kingliness of his nature, will pause and linger near the chair of a grand old heart that, wearing his many years as the trees their autumn leaves, exacts an admiration that is all the more sincere, because so fleeting.

And the gentle loving heart of woman grows gentler, more loving, as she sees her descendants nearing the shoals and rocks which she encountered in her youth. She feels what a merciful God she has, who has permitted her this time of rest and peace to pray for those she is about to leave. Heaven will scarcely seem like heaven to her unless she has the hope of welcoming them all there, even the little few hours' old babe; for she loves them all. She sits by the fire-side, and talks to God of them, and the time is not heavy on her hands. She may be a little blind, somewhat deaf, very feeble, but there is the less to turn aside her gaze from Heaven; nothing in the gay gossip of the world to give her other thoughts; and there are so many for whom to pray, 'tis as well she is tied to her chimney-corner.

Callous and cold-hearted must be that nature which can see such specimens of beautiful old age without a thrill of hope and encouragement that they may be like them. And the thought will at times thrust itself upon them, that at no time is it too early to prepare for being old.

Even at the moment when everything about us is radiant with hope, the earth is covered with flowers, and rose-hues are flung over us from the skies, even then it may be as well to remember that the summer blossoms bear their fruit in autumn, and that no hues have such radiance as the leaves before they fall.

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know for all these things God will bring thee to judgment. Therefore, remove sorrow from thine heart, and put away evil from thy flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity.”

There is but one pathway to the peace and rest of “Old Age;” from thence 'tis but a little way to—“The smile of God.”



A MEETING.

TWO that wrecked each other's hope,
Parting coldly in their prime,
Met upon the downward slope,
Taught by tears, and calmed by time,
Under autumn's perfect trees
Dropping ripe remembrances.

There they spread their stories out;
Face to face, and hand to hand,
Looking with a wistful doubt
Into the forgotten land
Where the wheels of life went fast,
Hardly seen till they were past.

Looking where the dawn had been,
Till each grey and pallid line
Shivers with a sun unseen
Which must never rise and shine,
And the moment, lost and vain,
Comes before their souls again.

Speaking softly, "Yes, I think,
You were there—you came at ten—"
"Round your neck was something pink,
How I hate the hue since then!"
"Hate a harmless riband!" "Nay,
I have pardoned it to-day."

"I remember what you said."
"But you laughed, and I despaired."
"Did I laugh? I was afraid
You might fancy that I cared."
"Be content, your pride shall be
Scatheless, as your heart, for me."

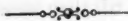
"Something in your voice assures
You have angry feelings yet."
"Something told me then in yours
That you would not quite forget;
Just one foolish moment lit
Hope—your laugh extinguished it."

"Sure the flame was very weak!"
"'Twas your silence let it die."
"If a man's hope will not speak,
Can a woman's heart reply?"
"Had I spoken?" "Do I know?
It was very long ago!"

Face to face, and hand in hand,
 Looking to those eastern skies,
 Is the light along the land
 Only borrowed from their eyes?
 Can the song of birds be drawn
 From a memory of dawn?

Lo, the hill, the sea, the plain,
 Flushing with familiar rose!
 Look away, and look again,
 But the colour stays and grows;
 Wherefore stand amazed and dumb?
 Knew you not that morn must come?

M. B. SMEDLEY.



THE OLD DOMINIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

IN the country town of Yawnly, in which I was born and spent my early days, was to be found a phase of society fast vanishing I suspect—if it has not already vanished—off the face of the earth.

Yawnly contained a population of six thousand; of whom I suppose five thousand nine hundred and sixty were reckoned plebeian; the remaining forty constituting "society." Our nearest large town was fifty miles off, and separated from us by a broad range of hills, so high as to be covered with snow from November to April. It was a journey of eight hours into town, so that visits to it were rare events in our community. Accordingly when it became noised abroad that "the Major," perhaps, intended to "go in" about the middle of next month, the possible event was talked of and canvassed as one of gravity and public importance. In the market-place, the Major was duly sounded respecting his intentions, and it being, let us suppose, ultimately ascertained that the journey is determined on, the community then began in earnest to prepare for the event.

For the following six days the Major's housemaid had a severe time of it, for the door-bell hardly ceased to wag. There were letters to friends in town to be posted there, and so save eightpence on the postage. There were presents to friends in town—geese, hams, turkeys, and what not. There was Mrs. Fordyce's Berlin worsted to be matched at Gunn's, and a cap of particular pattern to be bought for Mrs. Simpson's baby at White's; the Major, as incapacitated from personally conducting either of which transactions from the accident of his being a man, was requested to put himself in communication, immediately on his arrival in town, with Mrs. Fordyce's mother-in-law, and Mrs. Simpson's second cousin.

The Major's departure was of course so far an event of public convenience, but on the other hand it caused an awkward hiatus at the whist table; and who was to be his temporary successor became an interesting question.

Charley Hunter, perhaps, was entitled to the situation by right of seniority, but then Charley had a weak-minded tendency to play for a *ruff*;—"And I have no confidence, sir," the naval lieutenant would have observed, "in any man who plays for a *ruff*." Frank Fraser, on the other hand, was perhaps orthodox in his views on ruffing, but then he was apt to show a selfish disregard of his partner's game, and was generally unsound in his mode of playing his long suit.

The old officer, under the circumstances which I have supposed, would have heroically done his duty to society, and there would have been a sense of dignity and importance about his position, which would no doubt have helped to sustain him under its trials. About noon on the important day of the journey, some ten or a dozen members of the fashionable world, having no other particular object in view for the day's occupation, would have assembled at the coach office to "see him off," and to wish him good speed on his long cold journey.

It may be, on looking back on our little community, that I see it through some tender haze of sentiment; but, though petty, it does not seem to me to have been vulgar. It was quaint, old-fashioned, kindly. There were quarrels no doubt, Whig and Tory meaning something in those days; still there dwelt among us a kind of family affection. Everybody had seen everybody else nearly every day for a quarter of a century or more; and, if you belonged to the set, you were thought stiff if you addressed any one near your own age except by his or her Christian name.

When any one died—I mean of course any one of the upper forty—all the world attended the funeral. Parties were postponed, and there really was some of that "gloom" perceptible which, according to newspaper fiction, overspreads the land on the death of great folks.

In those days and under those circumstances, individual character was allowed a swing which would not now be tolerated in any community. Nearly every one whom I remember was what we call *par excellence* "a character." It was easier to be charitable, in appearance at least, to another man's eccentricities, than to subdue your own; and however much the Major might dislike the Doctor's testiness, and however much the Doctor might despise the Major's understanding, still they must meet in the reading-room in the morning, in the market-place during the day, in the billiard-room at night, and coming out of church on Sunday. Change was impossible, and people acted on the fact that, like husband and wife, they must take each other "for better or for worse." It was not, therefore, found necessary for the men and women to pinch and squeeze themselves down to any stupid monotonous standard of conventional propriety. When the Major was amused, he might laugh without fear of being ostracised. When old McTavish lost more than three-and-sixpence at whist in any one night, he invariably swore; and it became the clergyman's obvious duty to his neighbour not to hear—a duty which was duly fulfilled. It was plainly in the nature of things that McTavish should swear when a certain balance of odd tricks arose against him, and what use was there in struggling against the inevitable?

There was one figure in Yawnly—methinks I see it now, stalking gloomily by the shores of Styx—one tall, gaunt, cadaverous-looking figure, which stood aloof, towering physically and intellectually above all the rest. This was the schoolmaster, or the Dominie, as we called him. The Dominie belonged neither to the higher nor to the lower division of the community of Yawnly. He was neither of the upper forty nor of the lower five thousand nine hundred and sixty. He was in himself a third division. I well remember the first time in my life that I set eyes on the awful being who for ten long years was to me the greatest power on earth. 'Twas a holiday—a Saturday afternoon; I, a little fellow of six years old, was gazing admiringly upon a company of giants of ten, sitting round in a circle, blowing some birds' eggs which they had just been purloining. They were evidently in high good-humour with the results of their expedition; so I judged, at least, from the facts of their allowing a pigmy like me to gaze at them, and of their not thrashing me on account of my being small.

Suddenly there was a hush in the merriment. I could see nothing, for I was looking in the wrong direction; but I felt—

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round walks on,
And turns no more his head,
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

In the twinkling of an eye an awful Shape stood between me and the sun. Every heart beat thick, for we felt that the Dominie was among us. Would he confiscate the eggs? Suppose an intimation to be given of condign punishment to be inflicted on Monday, what a cheerful day would Sunday be!

He gazed for a few seconds—he was evidently devising some terrific scheme of retribution. At last a voice was heard: "Well, boys,"—or rather, "Waal, boys,"—it said, and every heart began to play a joyful tune. The intonation was that of a cheerful peacock, but it was a welcome one to the ears of young sinners. The Dominie was in a good humour to-day: "Waal, boys; are you blowing eggs?" And having uttered these words he vanished. A single stride seemed to take him across the green and deposit him in his own house.

The year after this remarkable incident I was set to learn Latin, having then reached the mature age of seven. Greek was judiciously postponed until the following session. Till this time I had been under the usher, who occupied a room apart from that in which the great Dominie himself held sway. He had therefore hitherto been to me little more than a mighty abstract, a great power, of whose mode of manifestation—except from the incident of the eggs—I could form no conception. For a few days after my translation to a higher sphere, all, I remember, went smoothly. I was just beginning to be able to "speak out" a little, when one morning, just before class time, an appalling rumour went round the school. It was to the effect that the Dominie was "roosed." What the etymology of the word is I have never been able to conjecture; perhaps it meant roused. However, what the practical meaning was, I quickly discovered. Between the Dominie,

as he had been and as he appeared on this direful morning, there was as much difference as between the sea in a calm and the sea in a tempest. Dux boy in the first class, who but yesterday had been held up as a shining example to the whole school of combined moral and intellectual excellence, was to-day denounced as a blockhead of the highest power, whose moral perversion must eventually bring him to the scaffold. The youngest boy in the junior class would not have blundered in construction in this "truly awful manner." It brought tears of sorrow and shame into his eyes to hear the classics murdered—"Yes, sir, leeterally butchered in cold blood"—in this fashion. The second class fared no better. It was perfectly evident that not a boy amongst them had ever thought it worth while to give one minute to preparing the lesson. They were the most incorrigible set of lazy, hopeless dunces that it had ever been the Dominie's lot in life to meet with. Then who was that making a noise there? who was it? It was among us little fellows. Crossing the floor with a single stride, he began to pound the shoulders of every boy in the class, beginning at the top. I was third from the bottom. It was rapidly coming to my turn. The thwacks were assuming fearful distinctness in my ears. I think I actually prayed that I might not disgrace myself by howling, though I felt that I should infallibly tumble to pieces if such a shower of blows came down upon me. And now the storm was at my very next door. I heard the whizz in the air, and expected to fall on the floor next moment, a heterogeneous mass of legs and arms. But behold! the danger was past, and I was scathless. Whether my minuteness had recommended me to mercy, or whether I was saved by the sound of a pop-gun at the critical instant, or by the direct interference of my guardian angel, I cannot say; but my ears were presently gratified by the sound of thwacking in a far-off corner.

Next day, however, brought with it ample compensation for the horrors of its predecessor. "Hurrah, hurrah!—play!—he's ill!" were the joyous sounds that saluted my ears next morning on entering the playground. Could it really be true that he was ill, and that we were to have a holiday! It seemed too wonderful and good. Presently, however, the great news is confirmed by the usher. Miserable little boys who are not "in Latin" are to be caged up as usual, while we—what shall we do?—football?—birds' nest?—fish? As a beginning we make a flood in the gutter by first damming it up with our caps and school-books. But surely ere that sun sets there is time for every sport and joy under heaven. To-morrow morning and Latin grammar seem a good deal further off than the grave will seem thirty years hence.

As time went on, matters did not seem to improve with the Dominie. His wrathful days grew more and more frequent; and as he waxed in Greek and Latin, the worldly results of his knowledge seemed to diminish. His school fell off, and it became apparent that the Dominie was committing the crime against society of growing poor. He was poor, proud, and lonely. Here, by a strange freak of fate, was a man who knew more Greek and Latin than most classical professors, who was an excellent mathematician, and skilled in most of modern European languages, dropt down in a

community, of which not another member could construe an ode of Horace or understand the fifth proposition of Euclid—and whose daily occupation it was to thwart nature by vain efforts to hammer the Latin grammar into the heads of little boys.

For many years it was expected that the fruits of the Dominie's lucubrations would show themselves in some great book—some learned tome which would shed a new and wondrous light upon obscure passages in the classics; or that the Dominie would discover a planet, or otherwise do something which would render both himself and our town famous. Great and long-enduring was the public faith; for of course the work, as it would be a mighty one when it did come, would require a score of years or so of incubation.

Twenty years passed away, leaving behind them, however, many a mark to show that they had been. The old coach has ceased to run; I seem yet to hear the sound of its bugle and the clatter of its horses' hoofs as they gallop down the High-street. Railways and telegraphs have changed the quaint, old-fashioned ways of Yawnly. Whiggery has progressed. People have ceased to feel disappointed because national ruin has not followed the passing of the Reform Bill; and society is getting used, on state occasions, to dining at six o'clock. New doctors and new lawyers have come, and the old set will play at whist no more. The old Dominie is still there, however, but silver-haired and bent. The days have come at last which I had often fondly pictured to myself when groaning under the tyranny of the cursed Latin grammar. I am now strong, in the prime of manhood, and the Dominie is feeble and stricken in years; but I have not the inclination to knock him down and batter him with school-books, which I had expected to have, on fulfilment of conditions necessary to the operation. The Dominie is now nearly seventy years old; but as yet there is no book, nor is any planet indebted to him for being rescued from obscurity.

I had been absent for a year or two from my native town, and, having returned to it for a holiday visit, I was renewing my acquaintance one afternoon with a favourite walk, when I saw a pony ambling slowly towards me, a pair of long, shapeless human limbs projecting awkwardly from its flanks. It turned out to be my ancient preceptor, whose circumstances I was glad to find had become such as to enable him to maintain the little animal on which he was seated—a strict economy, however, requiring to be exercised in the matter of tolls. I found this out on proposing to walk by his side as he ambled along. He would be delighted, he said; but it was part of the bargain that we were to pass no toll-bars.

I felt a strong desire to get at the mystery of the old man's life. Why was it that a thorough scholar and a man of originally good, though now all rusted, intellect, had been doomed to pass his days in going the same dreary round, obscure and poor, with no one to care for him or to love him? Why had he been intellectually barren? Why had the tree, in spite of all that had been done to foster and cultivate it, borne no visible fruit? What was the nature of "the little rift within the lute?"

I began conversation with some allusion to the war then going on; and, in

the twinkling of an eye, the old Dominie was among the Romans and the campaigns of Cæsar. Cæsar had always been a favourite of his. His eye lighted up with the fires of old, and to me the tide of years was rolled back.

"You remember, sir," he said, "the magnaneimity with which he behaved to his lieutenant, Labienus!"

My recollections of Labienus had, I believe, become exceedingly misty and obscure since I left school; but instinctively I shouted out at the top of my voice, "Yes, sir, certainly."

"In the waar with——?" and the Dominie fixed upon me an approving and interrogative eye. Here was a dilemma, from which I was, however, delivered by a sudden flash of memory.

"The Nervii," I replied, triumphantly; and I believe if he had told me to go to the top of the class it would have seemed to me quite in place.

"Quite right, boy," he replied, "in the waar with the Nervee—ee."

In the midst of the harangue, I began to wonder if the old gentleman had ever read a novel in his life. I availed myself of his pausing for a moment to take breath, to ask him the question. "Well, yes, sir," he replied, "I read wan last year." I inquired who was the author whom he had favoured. "It was wan of Mr. ——; I forget the aathur's name." I suggested Mr. Thackeray. "No, sir; it was the other man." "Mr. Dickens," I suggested. "That is the name, sir—Dicken. It was his Nickleby that I read. Nickleby Nickleby was the name of it." I asked if he had been amused by Nickleby Nickleby. "Well, sir," he replied, "I confess I laughed." "Did you not feel tempted then to read another?" I said. "No, sir; I found that a novel interfered with my serious reading."

Could the old Dominie have committed some crime in his youth, to expiate which he had vowed to soak his brain in Greek and Latin for so many hours a day all his life? He seemed to grudge an hour or two to a novel as a miser grudges half-a-crown for a bottle of wine. And I believe that the principle which actuated him was the same as that which actuates the miser. A man chalks out for himself some definite course of action, that he may attain some definite end. The end is reached, or is found to be unreachable; but though the motive which started him no longer exists, the momentum of habit is now sufficiently strong to keep him going just as if the original force still did exist. Habit is conscience. If the Dominie missed his daily Greek, he had the same feeling of mental uneasiness as the man who habitually speaks the truth has when he yields to the temptation of fibbing. What is to be taught as right, and what is to be taught as wrong, is settled by the views of its own interest held by the majority wielding material power; but whence comes it that a man can be trained either by himself or by others into having pleasure in a given course of action, or into having pain when he forsakes it?

A man begins to save money with the laudable ambition of making up for some youthful folly, or for providing for those who are to come after him. At each balance of his books he feels pleasure in the progress he has made towards the object of his desire, or pain in having made none, or receded from it. At last the end is gained, or ceases to exist; but human nature

declines to part with what has been for so many years an aim giving daily interest to life; for to multiply money has become to him just as much an object, and almost as rational a one, as to catch fish or shoot birds is to a sportsman. Unless, therefore, there have been powerful counter-agents at work the man ends in being a miser. So much for the danger of the grand principle of success—singleness of aim. The Dominie had doubtless begun to acquire knowledge with some object of youthful ambition. As he progressed he had found the necessity of still deeper lore, that his work might be thorough; habit meanwhile was slowly twining her invisible chains around him. He was getting into the habit of study while the productive faculty was rusting from want of use.

But what did it matter? All that man requires is a purpose. If you can contrive to be interested in making a ball spin into the air with a club, thank the gods for their kind gift. Do not turn impiously round and tell them that you decline to be interested, because to be so is below your intellectual dignity. This kind of wisdom is folly.

About a month after our walk the Dominie died, and I helped to lay his old head on its pillow of everlasting rest. During the funeral ceremony my thoughts, I remember, wandered strangely back to the scene of the birds' eggs.

The soul of the old Dominie I feel certain does occasionally revisit the glimpses of the moon. On these occasions it summons mine from its sleep-bound body to meet it, with the view of asserting its old supremacy. At least, I know that about once a month, in the darkest and stillest hour of the night, there comes to my bedside a tall gaunt figure, who, Latin grammar in one hand, and implement of torture in the other, commands me, in a strong northern accent, to say my lesson. Somehow, I never can "say." I am haunted by a sense of the incongruity of the situation. Am I to have nothing but school and Latin grammar to the end of my days? I must assert my independence, and decline either to "say" or to be punished. It won't do, however; I feel cowed. "Conjugate the verb, sir," says the well-remembered voice. I try to shout out "Doceo, docui;" but the words refuse to come. Down comes the cane on my shoulders, and having asserted its authority, the spirit of the old Dominie returns to its shadowy home.



THE CITY LIVERIES AND FEASTS.

"LIVERIES," in the proper sense of the word, that is to say, as *distinctive dresses* for the different trading Guilds, or Companies, of London, do not appear to have come into general use till towards the middle of the fourteenth century—about which time we read of "twenty-two *Pepperers*" dining, at their first assembly, at "the *Abbot of Bury's* in *St. Mary Axe*," and, after dinner, agreeing, *inter alia*, to adopt a "Livery" for which every one present was to pay his share down "even on the day of the fest." True, there had

been a kind of *quasi*-livery worn before this date; for we read that when Edward the First contracted his eventful marriage with Margaret of France, "the fraternities rode, to the number of six hundred, in *one livery of red and white*;" and even as early as the marriage of Henry of Winchester with Eleanor of Provence, in 1236, the members of the guilds wore a livery of a similar kind. But these dresses scarcely come within the proper notion of a "livery;" for though, it is true, they sometimes had a "*connuzance* of their (several) mysteries embroidered on their sleeves," they lacked yet the one essential feature of a "livery," according to our notions,—the crafts had *no distinctive dress*.

By the middle of the fourteenth century, however, distinctive liveries seem to have been firmly and generally established. The first real "liveries" we read of consisted of "a coat and surcoat" for ordinary use, and a "gown and hood" to be worn over these on occasions of state and ceremony. In fact, so much had the notion of a livery come soon to be mixed up with the very idea of a company, that we find the expression "to have the clothing," used as synonymous with "to be admitted on the livery of a fraternity."

But the adoption of liveries by the trading mysteries, useful as it no doubt was to the companies themselves, gave rise, incidentally, to evils which it required the strong arm of the legislature to put down. Thus we read that, as early as the reign of Richard the Second, distinctive dresses, "in the manner of the fraternities," were adopted as the badges of parties; and, in consequence of this, an act was passed in this reign, by which it was enjoined "that no varlets called yeomen, nor none others of less estate than esquire, shall use nor bear *any badge or livery*, called livery of company, of any lord within the realm, unless he be menial or familiar, or continual officer of his said lord." And a little later it was enacted, "that no spiritual or temporal lord, or others of less estate, or of whatsoever condition he might be, should give livery of cloth, either to the familiars of his household, his relations or kin, his stewards, council, or to the bailiffs of his manors; and also, that no livery should be given *under colour of a gild or fraternity*, or of any other association, whether of gentry, or servants, or of the commonalty; but that the whole should be abolished within ten months next after the Parliament then sitting: and further, that any taking livery contrary to that ordination, might be imprisoned without redemption; that the gild and fraternities offending should lose their franchises, and those having no franchises should forfeit one hundred pounds to the king." To these two statutes is to be traced, we believe, the still-existing necessity for obtaining a "royal licence" before legitimately establishing a domestic or other livery.

But the royal interference did no further go. The licence once obtained, the particular fashion of the liveries was left to the fancy and discretion of the licensees. So far as the city companies are concerned they seem to have agreed to an almost uniform *cut*, trusting to variation in *colour* alone as a sufficient mark of distinctiveness. Thus, after several trials in "scarlet and green," "scarlet and black," "murrey and plunket"—the last explained as "a darkly-red and a kind of blue"—the "Grossers," erst "Pepperers," seem to have settled themselves well into "blue gownes vyollette in grayne, and

hodyes parted with crymsyn;" whilst other companies affected "sanguine," or "cloth of blood colour parted with rayes, or striped," or "Savy-brown," or "grene."

Differing thus much in point of colour, the companies had, however, one great custom in common—a custom which, unless we are much mistaken, is kept in spirit with laudable fidelity by their successors. It was, in fact, none other than the happy habit of having "a dinner the first day that we did cut up our cloth of livery;" a proceeding without which, as every modern liveryman well knows, it could hardly be expected that any company business would prosper.

And now to get a general notion of the "liveries" themselves, let us take two examples, one in the time of Henry the Sixth, the other in the time of James the First. In the first of these the livery consisted of a coat and surcoat of the "murrey and plunket" above-mentioned, parted into equal halves—the fashion then in vogue—with furred edges, and confined round the waist by a girdle "garnished with white metal,"—a superstructure terminated downwards by a pair of "scarlet pantaloons piquéd at the toes." The lapse of two centuries wrought in the fashion of the London liveries a certain change; yet, perhaps, not so complete a change as might have been supposed. In the time of James the First we find the London liveryman robed frequently in a *black gown*, and, in general appearance, a kind of cross between a modern mayor and an Oxford *Bedellus*. The round hat, indeed, of the Jacobite liveryman was, in shape, identical with the flat dress-hat used on ordinary occasions by the *Bedelli*, and on occasions of state by doctors of law, medicine, and music, in the University of Oxford; a hat, by the way, which—since the present chancellor, Lord Derby, a few years ago, set the fashion of wearing his golden-tasselled *square* cap with his full-dress robes—is fast going out of use in Oxford ceremonies, and seems likely to be perpetuated, in its pristine state, only as a part of the costume of those ornamental officers who, *baculos ferentes*, form so important an element in the processions of the University. We say its "pristine state," because this ancient hat has developed a host of modern offspring—to wit, the crush-crowned cloth-basins now in almost universal use.

Leaving the head-gear for the livery itself, we find now the long, narrow sleeve, pendent from the elbow, much as it is worn at the present day, not only by municipal magnates, but by various grades both in the academic and forensic world. The *hood*, which, by the assumption of hats, had become a superfluity so far as covering the head was concerned, now lay upon the shoulders for ornament, as it does with us; and, in many cases, "parted with red and black" in the manner of our best-known academic hood. The body of the gown itself was often trimmed with "budge" or "foins"—whatever they, or that, may be; whilst the girdle had escaped to the neck, and become a ruff.

Such, then, were the ordinary dresses of the companies. On occasions extraordinary, the liverymen were decked in sheen of brighter hue; and, as each fraternity strove at these times to outstrip the others in the splendour of its temporary attire, we are not surprised to find that "the liveries of London"

formed a prominent and important feature on all occasions of special state and ceremony.

Having viewed the first stage of the "livery"—the cutting of the cloth, followed by a merry dinner—we now see the jovial liveryman, his last year's suit on his back, the materials for his new year's suit rolled up securely under his left arm, his staff in his right hand, trudging merrily along the narrow, over-hanging streets, perhaps through one of the old English snow-storms, to his snug merchant's house hard by.

Allowing time for the making up of the new suit, we next find our liveryman appearing early one morning, spic and span, at the hall, or temporary hostel, of his company. It is the day of the patron saint of his guild; and, after partaking of a slight refectation—more meagre a long way than the corresponding "snacks" of modern times—he and all his fellows in the fraternity go in procession, headed by the priest—an uncommonly lucky ecclesiastic, whose "wages," we find, were paid "in advance of the ensuing year"—to the church of their patron saint "for to here the high masse, and there to abide from the begynnyne to the endyng of the masse, and each of them shall offre a peny in the worshype of God, his blessed moder Marye," the patron saint, "and all seyntes." These processions of the liveries to their several churches were afterwards made with greater pomp and ceremony, but the essential features remained the same as before.

Mass over, the whole company return, with their invited guests, to dinner.

And what a mighty dinner it was! We read in one of the civic historians—"Then the mighty baron made the table groan, towering over the lighter viands, frumentie with venyson, brawn, fat swan, boar, congor, sea-hog, and such other delicacies as were stored above 'the salt,' whilst 'sotilities' of the company's trade or patron saint 'marvelouslie cunning ynrought' recalled the origin of the fraternity: and amidst the election ceremonies that succeeded, the 'bretheren and susterne' were cheered with 'voyds of spice brede, ypcras, and comfits,' to the renewed noise (music) of the minstrels, or 'waits,' or the higher merriment of the *London clerks 'playing some holy play.'*"

The words we have here italicised remind us of the fact that the ecclesiastics of the day were amongst the earliest, perhaps the earliest, actors of stage plays. At this distance of time we fail to take this fact well in; for, though some of our own clergy—more zealous than discreet—affect the footlights rather than the pulpit, it requires a not-easily-made stretch of modern imagination to picture to ourselves a set of "London clerks"—say, for instance, the members of Sion College, with their president for prompter—"playing some holy play" as an adjunct to the festivities of a London livery dinner, or a Lord Mayor's feast.

But both dinner and play were none the less facts. Of the substantiality of the dinner-fact let the incredulous reader judge for himself by inspecting the following bill of fare of a dinner given by the *Brewers* in the year of grace one thousand four hundred and twenty-five. This *carte de diner* is reproduced almost *literatim*. It runs (*Oyez! O Ring! O Brymer! oyez! O Webster! O Staples! oyez!*) as follows:—

FISH.

"Porpeys."	5 Pykes.
Oysters and muscels.	Lampreys.
Salmon and herring with fresh ling.	Turbot.
A salmon.	Eels.
"For codling's head."	800 herrings.

PANNERY.

"Wassell and cocket."	"Panis melliti" (spice bread).
White bread.	Trencher bread.
Payn-cakes.	Flour.

BUTTERY.

A hogshede of red Gascony wyne.	A kilderkin of good ale.
A kilderkin of peny ale.	

POULTRY.

21 swans, at 3s. 9d.	12 woodcocks, at 4d.
2 geese, at 8d.	12½ doz. "smaller birds," at 6d.
40 capons, at 6d.	3 doz. plovers, at 3s. the doz.
40 conies, at 3d.	18 doz. larks, at 4d.
48 partridges, at 4d.	6 doz. little birds, at 1½d.

"BOCHERY."

"ij joynts of befe."	"viiij fillets of vell."
"certyn ribbes."	"j surloyn of befe."
"ij bores."	"ij rounds of befe."
"ij fillets of porc."	"v pieces of suet of chepe cestas- avoir neate's tullough" (tal- low.)
"xl marrow-bones with marrow."	
"iij gals. of fresch grese."	

SPICERY.

9½ lb. of "poudre de pepir."	"Reysons de Corince."
"ij lb. de sugre blanch."	"Flower de ryse and sanders."
Saffron and ginger.	Almonds and dates.
Cloves and mace.	Honey and figs.
"Cynamon and nottemeg."	Costards, wardens, &c.
Oatmeal, onions, and garlick.	Vinegar and verjuice.
12 gals. of cream.	8 gals. of milk.

Such is the outline of the mediæval dinner itself. The bill of fare is perhaps sufficiently suggestive; but the following items of sundry adjuncts of "the fest" give us even a still better notion of old customs; and most certainly the following extract furnishes an excellent idea of the mongrel kind of language in which the accounts of the day were kept.

"j laborer p^r p^rterage des tables and tressels, iiij*d*.

Une carte p^r vessalx p^r la kechyn, cesta savoir pottes, pannes, spittes, rakkes, and rollers, v*d*.

It'm, A. William atte lee Peatur p^r l'allowance de xviiij dos. de peautre vessell, x*s*.

P^r p^rterage de mesmes vessell, iiij*d*.

For liij borden of rushes yn y^e th' alle, iiij*d*.

It'm, iiij birdens de russhes ove la cartage, iiij*d*.

P^r la lavendrye de lez bort-clothes, v*d*.

P^r cartage de donge, iiij.

But the expenses did not end as yet; for we are told that—For dressing, the cook received 23s.; six turnbroches, at 3d., 1s. 6d.; and the like sum of 3d. a piece was given to four assistants, who were borrowed from a tavern on *Fysche-strete-end*. The fuel for firing consisted of 120 faggots, which, including carriage, cost 4s. and 4d., and 4 quarters of “see-cole,” at 8d. per quarter. For the “musicals and theatricals” was paid 5l. 10s., as per the following entry:—“A lez players et ij harpers, et as dautres minstralx Kyngeston and Gromles, cs. vjd.” All the items of this “fest” together amounted to very nearly forty pounds—a by no means insignificant sum at that day.

But besides the *quantity* at these feasts, the *quality* is occasionally startling. Thus when we come upon the “fat swan,” the “conger,” the “porpoise,” and the “lamprey,” as articles of common consumption, we marvel at the dulness of the mediæval palate, and at the strength of the mediæval stomach.

But though these dinners had their strong meats, yet they were by no means unfurnished with subtler dishes—dishes that would have made glad even the heart of the author of *The Gastronomic Regenerator*—Soyer himself. What would the divine Alexis, indeed, *not* have given to revel in those oceans of cream, dotted so freely o’er with islands of *Reysons de Corinnee*, and all the other “spicery” in which his soul delighted! There is, however, one item of the spicery probably unknown even to the late Olympian *chef* of the Reform. This was “Flower de Ryse and Sanders.” What “ryse-flower” was we can guess, but what of “sanders?” It seems that this sanders was an aromatic wood of great repute, brought from India, and used as a great luxury to fumigate the hall at banqueting times; it was, in fact, the *Pastille Fumante* and *Aërosmic Skedator* of the day.

Hitherto we have spoken only of the “bretheren” of the fraternities; but here we should note that there were “susterne” also who were either *bonâ fide* livery-women, or “*compagnons*,” or “*demoiselles*,” of the brethren. These were sometimes present, in their livery, in the processions; and often at the feasts, where they sat either in “the ladies’ chamber,” or in the hall at the “ladies’ sideboard.” At a later date they sometimes assisted as principals: *teste* the following quaint extract from an account of an election feast of the *Drapers’* livery, in 1521:—

“The prior of Christ Church, chief. Sir John Milborne at his left—My Lady Fenkyll at his right. My Lady Milborn and my Lady Bayley, chief before. At the first side table in the hall Mr. Sadler began the bench, and Mr. Bowyer before him on the forme, and so down, Men of the bench, and women before them.”

And in the accounts of these ancient banquets we read further that “not only did widows, wives, and single women who were members, join the joyous throng,” but “‘bretherne’ could introduce their fair acquaintance on paying for their admission; and that—not, as in modern times, to gaze in galleries, the mere spectators of good living, but as (actual) participants in ‘the fest.’”

The feast, or “mangerie,” at length over, the *business* of the livery—O tempora! O mores!—begins.

Now the old year's wardens appear, "with garlondes on their hedes;" the fraternity choose fresh wardens for the new year, and upon the heads of these new year's wardens "the forseid garlondes" solemnly are "sett." All money, papers, and other things belonging to the company are delivered over to the new wardens, who are bound to serve their office under pain of fine, or expulsion from the livery.

And now, the business finished, the loving cup goes round: the "London clerks" appear (literally) upon the stage, and the "holy play" begins. Here—as our authorities make no mention of "supper," and as we can hardly suppose a meal of that kind to have been necessary under the circumstances—we will leave our livery-clad banqueters for the rest of the day, either listening to the "noise"—as they (perhaps not inaptly) termed it—of the "miustrels" who "discoursed" upon their "cornets, shalms, flutes, horns, and pipes;" or absorbed in rapt contemplation of the "London clerks" in *Isaac's Wedding*, or in *Noah's Flood*.

Stepping from gay to grave, we next see the liveryman attending at the hall for a purpose much less cheerful—the funeral of a brother. Even here, however, we note that it was an essential part of the ceremony, at the conclusion of the funeral, "to partake of a dinner at the hall," to which a distinctive character was given by the circumstance that "a commendable grace was said for the good brother deceased."

These guild-funerals, like the mass before the elections, were matters of strict religious observance. Most of the Liveries retained at least one priest, whose special duty it was "to seye his masse ev'e day but resonable cause it lette, with a special orison *Deus qui caritatis*, or a memorye for the quyke and on(e) other *Deus venire largitor*, for the dede, outake hie (high) and solempne festes, in the whyche he be spared but of his devocion: and also to say ev'e day . . . the same speciall orison abovesayd, for the same deede brethern and sistern with the commendacion (en)suyng, and every Monday and Friday, feriall, a mass of requir', or a memorie for all the soules of the forseide brethern and sistern, and for all Christen soules: and ev'y Monday, Wednesday, and Fryday, vij psalms penetencially, and Letanie with prayers and orysons that longen thereto, for the lyves and the soules aforeseyde, save only when theis psalms and Letanie been sayde in other divine service of the day.' But besides this general care for the "deede brethern and sistern," the ordinances enjoined that immediately upon the death of a member, "the warden for the year should order the beadle to warn the brothers to go to the dirge, and on the morrow to the masse under pain' of viijs.;" and, if it should so happen that any one of the fraternity should die without leaving behind him sufficient money or effects to bury him reputably, it was directed that "then it to be done of the common goods for the honour of the society." As a set-off to this, it is added that "when any of the fraternite makes his will, he may, according to his circumstances and free will, devise what he chuses to the common box, for the better support of the fraternite and their alms." That this permission was not unfrequently taken advantage of there are innumerable instances, of which we select two or three, specially quaint

from the curious manner in which the ejaculatory prayer is inserted in the body of the business entry.

1472. Rece'd of my master, Sir Will'm Taillo^r, at the beryng
of his son, John Taillo^r—*Ihū have mercy on his
soul!*—a reward to the feliship for their attendance . . . xls. Od.
1473. Rece'd from my master, Sir Will'm Taillo^r, atte th'
int'ment of milady his wyffe—*Ihū be m'cyfull unto
her soule!*—for a reward to the pore men of the feliship . . . xxs. Od.
1477. Rece'd of the bequest of milady Alleyn — *Ihū be
m'cyfull unto her soule!* xls. Od.

And, besides these gifts in money, gifts in kind, so to speak, were not uncommon. Thus "Dame Jenyns, wife of Sir Stephen Jennings, for the good zeal she had to the Company of Merchant Tailors, gave them a cloth of St. John, richly embroidered, set upon blue velvet, with a white rose over the head of St. John, the sides of green velvet brodered with *fleur-de-lys* of Venice gold, *entre tenore*, for the service of the altar in their chapel."

The liverymen all assembled in their best liveries at the "warned" hour—which was generally early in the morning—the Warden of the Livery delivers to the bedel the "herse-cloth," a state-pall kept by most of the fraternities to do honour to the deceased members and to the guilds to which they belonged, and the wardens, brethren, and bedel adjourn in a body to the house of the brother deceased.

We mention here, in passing, for the information of the curious in such matters, that several of these "herse-cloths" are still to be seen among the treasures of some of the city companies. The Fishmongers' Company, we are told, possess a "cloth" of this kind, which is one of the most interesting relics, not only of this particular kind of furniture, but of ecclesiastical art in general, of the period just preceding the Reformation. An adequate description of this gorgeous pall would fill half a dozen of these pages. We content ourselves, therefore, with saying generally that it is one mass of silk and cloth-of-gold. It is embroidered, in parts, into beautifully-wrought pictures of Christ, St. Peter, representations of angels, coats of arms, supporters, inscriptions, and the like, the whole forming an unparalleled specimen of mediæval art.

At the house of the late brother the members of the fraternity are met by other guests,—sometimes, if the deceased had been a man of special mark in the city, by the Lord Mayor and civic authorities,—and all proceed thence, in order, to the place of interment; the liverymen, in Jacobite times, clad "in their proper gownes, with ruffs and bonnets, and scrips or small bags over their left shoulders, and some with gloves in their hands, turning and conversing with each other." Arrived at the burying-place, the "dirge is solemnly sung" by the versatile "London clerks," the remaining obsequies are completed, the general guests disperse, and the liverymen return to the hall to partake of the funeral dinner.

That these funerals were often attended with considerable expense we clearly gather from "accounts of expenses."

Sometimes, indeed, they were on a very extensive scale in the sixteenth

century. They soon, however, begun to be more tricky and tawdry, and at length ceased altogether.

Of course, as Anglicans or Protestants, we are not supposed to have any great affection for the torches and tapers, branches of white wax, standard gylt candylstecks, bells, dirge, mass, priests, clerks, and torchbearers; but, little as we may esteem these things, we feel how immeasurably superior they were to the meretricious undertakery of the present day.

We are led to contrast the quiet graves of the ancient "brethren" with the suburban cemetery of our own times—chokeful as it is with heathen emblems, broken pillars, urns, inverted torches, and figures as of those who "sorrow as men without hope."

We are led to contrast the (perhaps inevitable) perfunctoriness of the modern cemetery-chaplain with the zeal of the "guild-preest," who knew intimately, as "bretherne and susterne" indeed, those whose obsequies he performed.

We are led to contrast the matter-of-fact manner in which our names are filled up in the cemetery "Register of Burials," between the former and the latter parts of the service—as our bodies are carried slowly round to a spot accessible to those familiar with the place by a short cut—with the "child" bearing the branches of white wax in their hands."

True, we cannot if we would, and—all things considered—we would not if we could, exchange these times with those. Yet may we look back with some sentiment upon the actors of those by-gone scenes. And, whilst detesting and lamenting the hateful modern mummeries that have taken the place of the solemn, solid, incidents of those funerals of olden time, we may comfort ourselves with the thought that the day of truth in taste has begun once more to break; and that, though we may never live to see it at its noon, we may perchance leave those behind us to whom the manners and customs of us their grandsires shall be far more strange and unintelligible than are to us the manners and customs of "the Liveries of London" four hundred years before.

W. SANDERS.



STOCKHOLM AND THE SCANDINAVIAN EXHIBITION.

BY AN IDLE VOYAGER.

THERE is, perhaps, no country in Europe so little visited by the British tourist as Sweden. Securely guarded from England by countries possessing greater advantages in the matter of scenery, and presenting fewer difficulties of access and of language, it seems destined to remain in its present respectable seclusion for many years to come. Paris, Brussels, the Rhine, and Switzerland, absorb nine-tenths of the tourist army; most of the remainder go to Spain, South Italy, or Norway, while a choice remnant penetrate to the odd corners of the earth, and are heard of at Nijnü Novgorod, or the second cataract of the Nile. Sweden is deserted by all, and has not

been quite fairly treated even by the universal Mr. Murray, who has not, till just now, considered it worth while to revise his Handbook for that part of Northern Europe. Hotel expenses at Damascus are now, it appears, of more importance to the English traveller than the modern conditions of civilization in Stockholm.

That city might have remained for ever unknown to myself had it not been that the weather in the sister country, Norway, had hung out the most unmistakable signs of obstinate rain, and compelled me to seek safety in flight.

A journey from Norway to Stockholm is notably dull. There is an oppressive feeling of going from a fine to a less picturesque country. The railway goes down, everything goes down, down from those blessed mountains among which the worn Londoner searches for health, and all resolves itself into a dreary flat. A level district is only estimable in the eyes of a railway engineer, and, next to the want of undulation of surface, I think the presence of firs and silver birches in such profusion as in Sweden is an aid to monotony. The traveller is literally oppressed with those trees, and with the superabundance of lakes. A landscape, it is generally admitted, can rarely, if ever, be perfect without water; but when the land is on one dead level, all the trees are fir trees, and water shows in all directions, the scenery becomes, to use no severer word, a bore. I should certainly have liked to consult our great modern art-critic before making so daring a statement, but I humbly conceive that no combination of the elements referred to can ever form a pretty picture. Now and then, truly, a white church, with a roof of white tiles, found itself in just such juxtaposition with fir trees and a still lake, that an unwilling verdict has been given in favour of the tableau; but such accidents became rarer as the bad road on which my party travelled left the western districts farther and farther behind.

It is a country, in fact, which drives a traveller to turn his attention to its people and its general resources as the only worthy subjects of thought and inquiry. The historian's thoughts go back at once to Gustav Adolf, Oxenstiern, and Charles the Twelfth, deigning, perhaps, to note Linnæus by the way; while the modern mind thinks with pleasure of Bishop Tegnér, who has been so gracefully introduced to English readers by Longfellow; of Frederika Bremer, and of her whom we familiarly call Jenny Lind. This is the sum of all that an average Englishman knows of Sweden, except, perhaps, he has picked up the stray fact that the best iron in the world comes to us from thence. Dim ideas of frost and snow, of sledges, furs, double windows, and pine logs, float across his mind when he is by chance called upon to picture to himself what life is like in the latitude of Stockholm.

The self-conceit engendered by going ahead with the single purpose of self-aggrandizement, and leaving other nations (as we suppose) far behind, has risen to such a pitch in England, that it would be good for many of us to pay a visit to a polished civilization like this of Sweden, which has, as it were, stood on one side, and learned whatever lessons were derivable from the struggles in peace and war going on far away from its northern home. I was not a little startled at having to make a humbling confession to myself

of my utter ignorance and carelessness of the real conditions of my fellow-men when, emerging from a dark pine wood through which the road had led me, I suddenly came upon the bright little station called Finnerödja, on the railway which runs south between the two vast lakes, Wener and Wetter, to the southernmost point of Sweden, and north and east to Stockholm. A single line of rails, traversed about three times a day, thus joins the south of Sweden with its capital, and runs like a main artery through the dense forests and desolate places of this strange land. Like a nerve, perhaps it would have been better to say, electrifying by its currents all the adjacent parts into life, making towns spring up where none had been before, and magnifying into comparative importance the villages it meets in its course.

The train had come far from the south, but it was to its time, and I was seated without delay in a second-class carriage of superlative luxury, padded and fitted in a manner superior to many of the first-class carriages in England. The appointments of the railway are neat and good. The officials are dressed in a good uniform, and the whole shows that the Government, to which the establishment belongs, is one which consults the comfort of its subjects, and wishes all things to be carried out in a style worthy of respect. The speed, too, of the train would have put the "Grand Vitesse" of our so-called lively neighbours, or an express on our own disreputable Great Eastern, to a wholesome shame; while that punctuality which the London Chatham and Dover Company, and our other railway man-slaughtersers scorn to exercise, is here most scrupulously attended to.

Journeying onwards, I had another illustration of the fact that it is quite possible for Englishmen to learn from their neighbours.

In field after field was one simple little device, almost deserving the title of an invention when mentioned in our own arrogant country, though in Sweden it seemed a mere matter of common sense and a few fir poles. The British farmer has been very indignant with the weather, because he has been unable to dry his cereals during this last wet harvest time. And yet all the while he has gone the very way to prevent the grain from giving up its moisture. If I want to dry some plants for a collection, I do not fold them up in a wet cloth. Judging by analogy, a British farmer would. He cuts his corn in despair when it is damp with the drizzling rain, and, seeing that the earth is wet also, spreads the ears on it—to dry, of course. He gathers all up into large sheaves set upright and bound close (for the better reception and retention of the rain), and then bemoans the ill fate which has ruined his harvest. His brother in remote Sweden goes differently to work. He knows that the air is seldom so saturated with moisture as to be incapable of absorbing more; and that while the wet earth is his worst enemy, the moist air may possibly prove a friend. Taking a couple of dozen of stoutish poles about eight feet high, he fixes them firmly in the ground in a row. Horizontally he attaches to these, light bars of wood, so that the whole has the aspect of a high fence with about four rails.

The wheat or barley is cut in the ordinary way, and is then taken by the armful, bent over the horizontal bars and slightly attached to them. Managed in this way, one of these fences presents the appearance, when viewed in

front, of a long, low, loosely-packed wheat-rick which has never been trimmed. Of course this is illusive only, for in reality the whole structure is of no comparative thickness, and presents a surface to every wind that blows—not a breath passing without traversing the interstices and bearing away some of the moisture. The rain, too, unless driven by wind, has small power to wet a mass of corn presenting so little upper surface, and disposed so as to allow every drop to drain off. The third advantage is, that the crop is altogether removed from contact with the reeking soil, which does half of the mischief. Anything more simple, more obviously effectual I have never seen. There are plenty now, I am thankful to say, who are ready and willing to tell our conservative race of ground-tillers that they are not far from being the worst and most ignorant farmers in Europe, and that the Belgian, Swiss, or Norwegian peasant-proprietors could laugh to scorn all the most learned in top-dressings and super-phosphates in Leicestershire or Norfolk—at least if results are any criterion of the wisdom of methods.

Stockholm is certainly a gay capital, well deserving the title of the Paris of northern Europe. The houses are handsome, the shops first-rate, and the populous hum of the streets makes a Londoner feel quite at home. Like Paris, too, the city was originally confined to a small island, and has spread thence to the shores between which its old site lies. The centre is, therefore, connected with the main suburbs by bridges only. On the central island, or more strictly speaking, pair of islands, is situate the king's palace, a massive square structure, quite imposing, if not beautiful. Near to it is the celebrated Riddarholms Kirke, the Westminster Abbey of Sweden. Here, in vaults with open doors, lie Gustav Adolf and his best warriors, each in his plain coffin. Here hang in dusty folds the banners taken in the Thirty Years' War, with many other tokens of power and glory long passed away. A sad sight truly to a Swede, and one which inspired a heart-felt wish, even in an Englishman, to see at no distant date a Bund of the three northern nations, a federation which would restore to Scandinavia some weight in Europe, and render more difficult such discreditable exploits as those of Count Bismarck in Schleswig-Holstein.

There seems to have been some apprehension on the part of these Scandinavian nations, that an invitation to the world to join them in an universal exhibition would not have been generally accepted. For once they felt their isolation, and, perhaps, as a Dane expressed it, their want of greatness. They felt that Stockholm could hardly be assumed as a centre for so powerful an attraction as would be needed to draw, not only the richest produce of the world, but the crowds of visitors so essential to the success of such an undertaking. There can be little doubt that they judged rightly in acting thus modestly. Whether the coming display at Copenhagen will be more aspiring remains yet to be seen.

The whole framework of the structure in which the Scandinavian Exhibition is held is most appropriately formed of pine, well braced up, and the building receives ample light within from large glazed spaces along the sides and in the roof. The striking external feature is a dome, if such a term can be applied to a flattened cone, the height of which from the base is not more

than one-third of its greatest diameter. The whole has, however, an inferior aspect, not in the least assisted by the flags which flutter in profusion from all parts of the roof.

The plan may be described as that of a nave and chancel meeting in a large octagonal space under the great dome. There are no transepts.

Inside the appearance is much better, and though the whole structure is of less extent than a single annex of our last great International Exhibition, there is a close likeness between the two buildings in respect of design and arrangement, even to the placing of a large fountain under the dome.

The price of admission could certainly not be complained of as unreasonable. The tickets, or rather metal counters, were sold to us by a woman who sat in a small wooden box like those on a Thames steamboat-pier, and politely dispensed the said counters at fifty öre ($6\frac{1}{2}d.$) each, with official catalogues at a similarly extravagant sum.

Wide galleries ran all the way round inside, being supported by the same wooden pillars which support the roof. A considerable amount of tint and ornament is accorded to every part; but is so judiciously applied as to give at the same time a harmonious colouring in the general effect, and to satisfy the eye when especially directed to any particular portion. Banners suspended from between the pillars, and from staves projecting from the galleries, complete the internal decorations of the building itself.

The general scheme of the arrangement is first an assignment of separate spaces to the four contributing countries, namely, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland; secondly, a sub-division of the produce of each into ten classes, and of each of these classes into groups.

The classes are as follow: —

1. Ores, rough stone, timber, and hunting and fishing produce.
2. Clocks, telegraphs, philosophical and musical instruments, and educational apparatus.
3. Artillery, engineering, ship-building, and architectural models, &c., agricultural implements, and carriages.
4. Cutlery, guns, jewellery, &c.
5. Glass, porcelain, and statuary.
6. Wood, horn, ivory, and paper work.
7. Carpets, cloth, silk, cotton, linen, leather, and furs.
8. Beverages, tobacco, and chemical products.
9. Books, engravings, and photographs; and
10. A miscellaneous class of small household manufactures.

Sweden naturally takes the lead in the manufactures, and, as might be expected, shows a splendid collection of iron in various conditions. In this branch of trade the abundance of the best charcoal, afforded by the interminable forests of the country, almost gives the Swedes a pre-eminence over our most noted iron-works. Perhaps the celebrated case of specimens exhibited by the Earl of Dudley in 1862 might hold its ground here; but for homogeneous texture and tenacity the Swedish iron can scarcely be equalled.

One species of iron-manufacture, of which specimens were exhibited, while

undoubtedly excellent as regards material, was sadly behind the age in other respects. How can these Scandinavian nations ever expect to hold their own, if, in this year 1866, they persist in making rifled, but not breech-loading cannon? England is slow enough to adopt, publicly, any invention; but we have for several years had our light Armstrong field-pieces, carrying with a precision, and capable of being fired with a rapidity almost marvellous. So far as my observation went (and I am supported by the testimony of other visitors) not a single breech-loader, cannon or musket, was shown. Indeed, the soldiers in Stockholm stand on guard with their ancient Brown Besses shouldered as though they were dangerous weapons. Worse than this even, I myself saw in Norway, in the present year, a troop of volunteers manœuvring with *flint-firelocks*. I believe and hope that such a spectacle will never again be seen in Europe; and it is but right, therefore, that I should give honour to those to whom it is due by mentioning the name of the corps. I believe they would be called the Stavanger Firelock Volunteers.

To be fair, however, to the Swedes, they have done well in other respects in the matter of national armament. They have, in the harbour of Stockholm, a long, low, dangerous-looking craft, with two circular turrets on a deck sloping to within a foot or two of the water's edge—in short, a Monitor of most forbidding aspect, and, I doubt not, of warlike worth.

Next, perhaps, to the show of iron, the skins of bears, ermines, and silver foxes (some worth twelve pounds each), and the articles of ladies' apparel (boas, muffs, sleeve-cuffs, and jaunty little hats of the "pork-pie" type) made of the skin and feathers of the grebe, with its charming play of grey and brown tints, may be reckoned as characteristic of these northern countries. Many of the bear-skins are of large size and soft woolly texture. Some of them are of a dark-grey hue, varying into different shades, and speckled with white in such a way as to make them appear very much like the silver-fox skins, which are so beautiful and so highly-prized. A moderately good bear-skin may be bought in Bergen for about two pounds.

In most of the necessary articles, nay, even elegancies of life, the four kindred countries, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland, showed surprisingly excellent work. The china, glass, and furniture being some of it of quite a first-rate order, while the woollen fabrics were pronounced, by some who had opportunities for forming just opinions on the matter, to be little, if at all, behind the manufactures of Bradford in point of material and workmanship.

The show of machinery was decidedly poor. Most of it was agricultural, and was principally remarkable for the extreme rudeness of the workmanship. A paper-making machine was shown, however, which seemed to combine most of the modern improvements. Many machines were kept in motion, during stated hours, by an arrangement for distributing steam-power similar to that in our own International Exhibition. A cathedral clock and bells, and a few watches and chronometers completed the display under this section.

A half-regret is felt by a visitor at there being no gallery of pictures attached; although one has not far to go from the Exhibition to see a well-arranged and characteristic collection of paintings from the four countries. Of photo-

graphs there were many of all descriptions. The portraits were peculiarly excellent, being wholly free from those distortions which are so familiar to us in the *carte-de-visite* albums on our friends' drawing-room tables, and which we pass over as almost inseparable from photography.

From Finland little was to be expected; but it was really fairly represented, allowance being made for the many disadvantages under which the country labours. A few carriages, sledges, and carriages of excellent workmanship, and a piano of at least comely exterior, were among its contributions.

Denmark did not shine forth as brilliantly as might have been expected, for though the quality of the goods was perhaps unimpeachable, in quantity they fell far short of those from Norway.

The latter country showed strongly in metallic and fish produce, but fell strangely behind in the display of timber. In carriages and sledges it was supreme, of course, and a zealous traveller might here feast his eyes with the most elegant of carriages and the swiftest of sledges—carriages positively with springs and padded seats behind for the "tiger" of the place and period, a creature who in these regions is generally required to dangle his legs from a board nailed across the ends of the shafts, which protrude at the back of the vehicle, behind the traveller's seat. The carriage has been often described, but few except those who have tried it know at all what sort of a conveyance it really is. I can only say, that, if you sit down on a tolerably thick book, with the lower part of your back wedged into a corner of the room, and your legs straight out before you, and then imagine just so much of the walls and floor as would keep you in this position placed, without any intervening springs, on two bars of wood attached across two long wooden shafts, and this apparatus set, also without springs, on a pair of large wheels—you, my reader, will have a practical view of a Norwegian carriage. The natives expect the long, thin shafts to act as springs, but as a matter of fact and experience, they do not so act. A passage over a few stones sends such a jarring vibration all up the spinal column, that a very few miles leave a traveller sore and disappointed with native modes of progression in Norway. Springs alleviate this evil, and are present in all specimens of carriages in this Exhibition.

The sledges were perhaps the most beautiful variety of carriage exhibited. Luxuriously fitted up, with a body more like a double velvet sofa placed on runners than one's preconceived idea of a sledge, they seemed the perfection of comfort. The very sight almost tempts an Englishman to postpone his next year's trip till mid-winter, and then to leave the uncertain weather of England for the clear, steady frosts, lasting snow, and fleet sledges of Sweden.

Ranging round the building, there are many things which strike an English eye through their quaintness; but this is more often the case in the division assigned to Finland than in those belonging to the more advanced countries. Throughout the whole show, however, there was but one thing in bad taste: it was a cigar trophy, which nearly approached in absurdity, as it did in general outline, the celebrated candle trophy of 1862.

After leaving the Exhibition, the tourist can hardly do better than see the

collection of pictures in the museum. Here are assembled the best works of the painters of the four countries just seen as contributories of articles of manufacture, and here we may judge of the relative and absolute merits of the Scandinavian painters. Herr A. Tidemand, known to the English by his splendid work "A Norwegian Duel," which we all saw at South Kensington in 1862, reigns supreme, with eight examples of his best style. He is a Norwegian. Next after him, in my estimation, ranks Mamsell A. Lindegren, a Swedish lady of rare ability. Of one picture, I regret that I have forgotten the painter's name, but it is a remarkable work in neutral tint, representing an episode in the late Schleswig-Holstein war.

Beyond the subjects which I have touched upon there is much to see in Stockholm, and much more which I could describe; but it is time for me to take leave both of the city and of my reader. I can scarcely do so more fittingly than by commending these northern countries to his further consideration.



SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

I.

HOW crudely and indiscriminately the happy folks will talk about the jewel that adversity wears, and the use of unfavourable circumstances in strengthening and bringing out the character. The winds that threaten the strong oak serve to root it deeper and strengthen its sinewy green arms, they say. But, alas! we must distinguish. No child of the field or the forest was ever yet bettered by being set in a bad soil, or battered by angry incessant gales.

Look at a tree on the top of a cliff on a windy shore; notice its struggles of self-help; how it sends out stronger root-branches, strains and clings and stretches with its feet, in the effort to hold on to the bare life it gets out of the cruel crag. In another and more kindly place it would not have done this; and shall we not pity the beautiful struggling tree? We are glad it does not let itself fall over, but we know it cannot be such a bonny green thing as if it had the chance to branch out freely everywhere. It has had too much "adversity," poor tree. What life needs for beauty and various power is various experience. Why should not variety of experience in human life have the same effect on human character as the wind has on the trees; catching them on every side, and giving them perfection of form, and lovely versatility of relation to the landscape? If you look closely at a tree that has grown in such a position that the wind has caught it mostly on one side, you see that the tree has not only a distorted shape, but that the growth of leaf is deficient on the windy side. There are knots, or stumps, where the tree has tried to have branches, only the cold wind has spoiled the poor struggling buds from time to time. From these knots or stumps, and from the gaps along the stem, you can figure to yourself what a lovely tree it might have been if it had been able to fling out its boughs all round in the sweet soft air.

If you remember the appearance of straggling trees in bleak barren spots, you may feel sure that when God makes a new heaven and a new earth, we shall not see trees like them. Because their aspect is in harmony with the scene, as we have been accustomed to see it, they tell a tale of their own in which we may find beauty, if our own mood is fitting; but they are not beauty itself. They are not like their fellows of the leaf which grow in good park or forest-land—in massy clumps for company, and yet not too close together for happy expansive life—with now and then an officer-tree, that has stepped out in front of the ranks, and stands forth before the woodland, an example and a glory in the joy of its beautiful green life: or like the fine fellows that you may see pressing up a loamy hill, with one bold tree waving its boughs at the top, as if it had run a glad race and won it.

It certainly seems to me as if it could scarcely be a happy thing for any human tree to have first peeped above the soil in Shoemakers' Village. But Cherry White, the Tomboy of the place, was certainly a handsome sapling; she reminded one of a mountain birch, fresh with the rains and the breezes of the hill-range.

II.

It was such a pouring wet night; the streets looked so utterly miserable in the driving, splashing rain, that Mrs. Branch had just determined on shutting up for the night her little pastry-shop, situated on the outskirts of Shoemakers' Village, though it was only a few minutes past nine o'clock, and she burnt, not gas, but common oil, in a rather dismal-looking lamp. Mrs. Branch was a motherly-looking elderly woman, with tender brown eyes and a soon-flushing face; but as she wore round spectacles with old-fashioned tortoiseshell rims to them, she looked too quaint a person, too open in herself to ridicule, to make another shy, and might even be supposed not to see very well.

As she stood at her shop-door, feeling satisfied that nobody would be passing her way for such superfluities as pies and tarts on so drenching and windy a night, she became aware of the sound of a slow footstep. A shabbily-dressed man approached, lowered his umbrella, and entered the shop. His boots were clogged with clay and red mud, for he had been wandering among the brick-fields, and had only now been driven by hunger from the shelter of an outhouse, where he had been sitting on a clump of straw, with a wheelbarrow set on end to shield him from the wind and wet—a little. His well-fitting but threadbare clothes were buttoned up to the chin—for lack of linen underneath—and his umbrella was an ugly dark green gingham affair, with a hook handle of brown horn. Mrs. Branch could discern through her queer round goggles two things—that he was stiff with pride, and famished with want.

"Madam," said he, "I want——"

"Yes, sir," gently interposed Mrs. Branch, finding he hesitated; she put down the shutter, and addressed him as if he had been a prince, or—an esteemed preacher in that Particular Baptist connection which contained nearly everything on earth that Mrs. Branch held venerable.

"Yes, sir?" said she, interrogatively, with something of the air and tone of

a tender mother, and something of the respectfulness of a servant addressing a master.

"Madam," resumed the man, with an attempt at jauntiness, "I wish—to ask—is there a Mr. Douglas Percy living in this neighbourhood?"

"No, sir, there is not—to my knowledge," replied Mrs. Branch, fancying that the name Douglas Percy had an unreal, playbill sort of sound with it. Was it invented on the spur of the moment?

"Thank you," said the man, waving his hand, as if it was of no consequence, and marching stiffly away into the wet again, with his umbrella. As Mrs. Branch heard his even footsteps plashing down the path, she began again at the shutters, and had got as far as the third—she was not brisk in her movements—when the shabbily-dressed man came up again; this time, he put down his umbrella with a sudden decisive clash, and stepped into the shop with an air which was almost threatening. Indeed, poor Mrs. Branch stepped behind the counter, and from behind that entrenchment, glared rather timidly at the wan, faint face of the stranger, who now spoke first in a clear but hoarse and thirsty voice—

"Madam! I wish for . . . one of those . . . meat pies," pointing to a set of pies in flat tin dishes.

Mrs. Branch longed to offer him a bottle of ginger-beer; but reflecting that ginger-beer might not be good for an empty stomach, she had got half-way into her little parlour in search of a cup of milk; yet she stood in a certain awe of the man's proud way, and feared to offend him by offering anything for which he had not asked. His voice, now a little sharper, recalled her to the counter—

"One of those meat-pies," said the stranger.

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Branch, carefully shovelling the pie into a paper bag, and handing it to him; whilst he was, apparently, feeling in his pocket for the money.

"Dear me," resumed the stranger, after some fumbling at his trousers, "I regret—I am very sorry—how foolish of me—I find I have left my purse somewhere. I must beg you, madam, to accept my . . . my umbrella . . . as a pledge until I pass this way again. . . . Are you quite *sure* Mr. Percy does not reside anywhere near here?"

"Oh, sir," said the widow, pathetically, "do not think of such a thing! I give a good deal of trust, and you can pay me any time!"

"Thank you; no," said the stranger; "I prefer to leave a . . . a guarantee; and, setting up the umbrella against the counter, he was gone in a moment; the pie put nonchalantly into his pocket. His speed of pace, poor man, had two motives; he wanted to hurry from a scene of shame, and he was in anguish to get a morsel of food into his mouth.

He was more to be pitied than Mrs. Branch; but she, too, was an object of compassion. The tears came into her slow, elderly eyes, and her first impulse was to rush out into the rain after the forlorn wretch, and force him to take back his umbrella. But she could not decide to do this—she stood in awe of "a gentleman;" and, after a sad pause, ended by a long, deep sigh, she put up the two remaining shutters, and closed the shop. Then she fell

into a melancholy muse, with her arms folded, leaning forward upon her little counter; then mechanically trimming the "snaice" of the lamp-wick; lastly, wiping her spectacles, for, in truth, the glasses were wet on the inner side. But she had barely got them astride upon her nose again, when she heard an authoritative loud tapping at the shop-door.

"Who is there?" she asked, coming from behind the counter, and laying hold of the latch.

"It is I, madam; it is I; open the door!" said a voice, which she instantly recognized as that of the stranger.

"Thank God!" said she to herself, and drew the bolt with a beating heart.

"Come in, sir, come in," she said, or tried to say, for the impetuosity of the man's speech and behaviour overthrew her utterly. He would not enter; there was a flush of anger on his famine-pale face; but he spoke up, though with a voice which was like an articulate sob, as he flung down the just-bitten meat pie.

"Take back your pie, ma'am—take it—it is not fit for a dog to eat—take your pie! I am a *gentleman*, madam, a *gentleman*, and have not been accustomed to eat carrion."

Swift as lightning he was gone, and he slammed the door to behind him. The wind blew, the rain poured, and Mrs. Branch burst into tears; but, mechanically smelling at the wretched pie, she found, to her confusion, that the meat was really "turned." Still more mechanically she opened the umbrella, and with a housewifely curiosity that was ludicrous in its incongruity, was actually scrutinizing the ribs and fastenings through her goggles when she heard another knocking at the door.

"Who's there?" said the poor old lady, scarcely able to speak for crying; "who is it?"

"It's me, Mrs. Branch; it's Cherry White; it's Tomboy—all in the wet."

And, Mrs. Branch hastily opening the door, there stood Cherry, with her frock flung from behind over her head, like Virginia in the shower, only that there was no Paul.

"Oh, Mrs. Branch," said Cherry, gaily, "I only want a ——"

"Child, child!" interrupted Mrs. Branch, laying one hand on the shoulder of the amazed Cherry, and holding out the green gingham umbrella with the other, "take this and run after a gentleman that's gone down the lane to the left hand, and make him take it—and bring him back, if you can—and God 'll bless you, Cherry! Make haste, my dear, my dear; you're so clever, you can do anything; make *haste*!"

So then Cherry, fairly pushed out into the street, found herself commissioned to bring back somebody if she could, but at all events to make him take a green gingham umbrella. The first thing she did was to put it up for shelter; but she had not gone many steps before she saw a slim, long-legged figure advancing rapidly towards her. She knew the legs; they belonged to Woods, the sandy-haired Sunday-school teacher, of the Particular Baptist connection at Zoar Chapel—the Cumbersome Christians, as Cherry called them.

Now Cherry herself was High Church—not to say Ritualistic; and between her and the Cumbersome Christians in general, not to say Woods in particular, there was a sort of cheerful feud. But a woman, or a girl, was never yet too proud to make use of even an enemy; and Cherry immediately resolved to put this Cumbersome Christian on his chivalric mettle.

"Oh, Mr. Woods!" she exclaimed, quite amiably, "I'm so glad I met you! Did you see a gentleman walking the way you've just come—without any umbrella?"

"Yes, miss, I did," answered Woods, with a slight rising inflection in his voice, which suggested that he was born north of the Tweed.

"Oh, that *is* good of you!" said Tomboy, absurdly, but not ineffectively. "Mother Branch—I mean Mrs. Branch—wants him directly . . . it's very important," she continued, solemnly; "and if he won't come, you're to *make* him take this umbrella."

III.

Shoemakers' Village is not the place to go to for boots and shoes of extraordinary quality, or for any other particular product of nature or art that cannot just as readily be obtained elsewhere, quite as cheap, or cheaper, quite as good, or better. But it is not a wholly uninteresting place to people with eyes and ears. It lies in a hollow which was once entirely rural, between, on the one hand, a neighbourhood of respectable suburban villas, gradually shading off into half-finished streets, and, on the other hand, a semi-suburban district, which may be called rural until you come to villas again—villas which have sprung up around a railway station lying some miles from the town. Some of the little streets were once respectable enough in their modest way; they struggle to keep up appearances still; and, at the outskirts of the village, there are houses which were once quite detached, and which look rustic and old-fashioned to this day. They have the advantage, too, of being on the side which is nearest to the open country. Generally, I should think, there was a sort of consciousness of semi-rurality latent in the minds of the Villagers—who have most of them garden *ground*, as distinguished from gardens. There are real farm-houses within the limits of the Village, construing the word rather liberally; there is in the Village a little boy who is reputed to have cut his nose in two over a turned ploughshare; and the Villagers throw dead cats, dogs, and rats into the market-gardens that abut upon the ends of the streets at one side. I once overheard a small Villager, in a torn and degraded knickerbocker suit, say to his mother—

"O mother, I should so like to walk along the tops of that row of cab-bages!"

But who ever heard of reverencing Nature in the shape of vegetables?

Shoemakers' Village is, in fact, a crude, unornamental agglomeration of houses, the rise and collection of which could no doubt be related with great ease by the oldest inhabitant, but which has been left behind by the advances of the politer portions of the neighbourhood to which it hangs on like a shed to a mansion. In those politer neighbourhoods it is known as the Village, or less elegantly, though more frequently, the Willage. When the working-man

gets up cross, and sits down to his breakfast glum, the watchful house-mother says to the Tilly Slowboy of the *ménage*—

"There, Sarah Jane! your master's been and got out o' bed on the wrong side agin. You jest run to the Willage, and get a bloater or a 'addick—he wants a relish—and you can pay next time." It is one of the moral superstitions of the Village Proper and the Village Improper, or, as we may say, the Inner and the Outer Village,—or, again, the Village and the Willage,—that, when a man gets up cross, he wants a relish. The Willage, then, has quite a reputation for "bloaters," and "haddicks," and "rashers," and everything in the nature of a "relish," eggs, called heggs by the Villagers, and watercresses, known in the community as creases. To such an extent is the great Relish System carried in the Village that I have heard of a little chit of a girl from the Village engaged to help another servant in the house-work at a "place" outside of the Village, giving her mistress notice because she'd always been accustomed to her relish at breakfast, every morning, and couldn't heat a mossel without it. In the Village Proper, *i.e.*, the Willage, there is one small coffee-shop in particular, much frequented, I believe, by working-men attached to the railway extensions, and other men of the kind who have to get up early; and in the window of that shop I once saw written up, on a greasy piece of foolscap, the peremptory words—"No more Haddick or Bloaters will be cooked at this shop." Now, the inference I drew was that the surrounding male population had been in the habit of taking into this shop salt fish, haddock or herring, for their dinners, and getting it cooked for nothing, on the strength of buying a cup of coffee or something of that kind, but that this kind of business had at last become as excessive as it must always have been unremunerative.

To make money by keeping shop among the very poor is not by any means a difficult task. Mr. Potts, the keeper of the chief beer-shop in the Village, and Mr. Luckin, the proprietor of the general shop which is most esteemed for such delicacies as marmalade at eightpence a pot, and golden syrup, which means treacle, to say nothing of family jam, which means a sort of fruity mixed pickle, are both of them warm men. So, too, is the baker, who, in his own proper line of relish,—the hot roll,—does an enormous trade. At a time not too remote to be readily recalled, Mr. Potts and Mr. Luckin having embarked in a quarrel which arose out of some betting transactions, a fight ensued, and out of the fight arose an action-at-law, in which one side recovered damages against the other—I do not know which side—but I heard that the side which lost was found to be quite equal to paying off-hand such a little matter of law-costs as two hundred and fifty pounds. I fancy the most enlightened members of the general public have but a poor idea of the rate at which keepers of general shops feed. But consider the temptations to which they are exposed—living as they do in the neighbourhood of relishes all day and all night. Their very parlour smells of bacon, and, if there wasn't room for all their stock of American cheeses, they'd pile up a few in the bedrooms. Mr. and Mrs. Luckin, with their daughter Amelia—of whom more will be said by-and-by—revel in eggs, and cheese, and Wiltshire bacon, and German sausage, and ham, and marmalade. They are all three as fat

as butter—Mr. Luckin, indeed, is as fat as two or three butter-casks rolled into one—and how the little pony manages to draw them when they go out “of a Sunday afternoon” for their weekly airing, is known, I suppose, to providence and the pony. As for Mrs. Luckin, she is a hogshead—she waddles—she half fills the space behind the little counter, and it is quite a sight, when she lifts her globose arms, and reaching the thing down from the shelf, rests upon her globose bosom one of the green canisters, hieroglyphed in gold with pseudo-Chinese, in which the Luckins keep what they sell for tea—for it is a curious fact that the poor have no idea of the taste of either tea or coffee. Coffee they think ought to boil—tea ought to “stand on the hob to draw,”—and chicory or sloe leaf will very well serve their turn. However, poor Mrs. Luckin has been several years “under a medical man to keep down the fat.” Pray observe that it is not etiquette in the Village to speak of the doctor, except in confinement cases—you must always say “medical man.” Also, that the chief, and almost the only disease known in the Village,—besides Rheumatics,—is Inflammation. “He’s not expected to live—he’s got Inflammation,”—that was a sufficiently precise bulletin in the Village. The complaint might be inflammation of the brain, or inflammation of the pancreas—but it was all one to the Villagers: that terrible word Inflammation was quite enough to indicate that it was going hard with a sick person, and “he’s got Inflammation” was always spoken with a lifting of the brows and a tone of solemn deprecation—as who should say—“Think of *that*, now! You may have Inflammation some day!”

The superficial cultus or religion of the Village presents a curious aspect to the casual observer. Of the deeper religious life which is there I shall have something to say presently. But, to a passing observer, the chief religion of Shoemakers' Village would certainly appear to consist in going to the Cemetery, or Cimetairy, as the Villagers pronounce it, on a Sunday afternoon. It happens in this wise. The men grub and moon about unshaven all the Sunday morning, smoking clay pipes, and getting into the way of the women. It is a rooted superstition in the Village that you never need “clean yourself”—that is the phrase—till after dinner; before which great sacred event, curl-papers, beards unshaven, and faces unwashed are quite allowable. At about a quarter before one on a Sunday morning, the lord and master of a household in the Village begins to wake up to the necessity of asserting himself. Dinner will soon be home from the baker's—probably a piece of beef reposing on a three-legged iron “rest” in the middle of a pool of batter. So he begins to make an impetuous pretence of being useful, by scraping away at the horse-radish—which he does with a hissing sound, the children looking on, and the youngest making sudden dabs at the falling shreds, at the risk of cut fingers. After dinner, “we clean ourselves;” then dressing—a very hot, hurried, troublesome, scuttling sort of business, everybody being uncomfortable from having eaten too much; and then, off to the Cimetairy, with a vague idea of performing a religious duty. If there happens—and of course there does happen—to be a funeral or two going on, there is something like a religious service to attend, and you have to take your hat off in the open air, while somebody is reading something which ends with Amen. This is decidedly a

religious exercise. But, in any case, you walk about, with the baby in your arms, if you are good-natured, and it isn't too hot (for a *man*); and you read scraps of texts on tombstones, and, of course, highly poetical epitaphs. It is well known that the Englishman often puts a scrap of Scripture on a tombstone by way of charm or rune, or with a vague idea that it is a sort of written absolution for the person whose remains lie below. As thus:—

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOHN THOMPSON,
OF
THIS PARISH;
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
22ND MAY, 1864.
AGED 57.
Prepare to meet thy God!

Or, thus:—

IN MEMORY
OF
ANNE WELSH,
WIFE OF RALPH WELSH,
OF THIS PARISH;
WHO DIED JANUARY 8, 1860.
AGED 65.
All flesh is grass.

Sometimes there is a bit of original poetry, like this:

What is Man? a falling leaf;
We bid thee now a long farewell;
We are left resigned to grief,
To all our hopes a solemn knell.

Hallelujah!

Such an epitaph as this the Villager reads aloud to M'ria, with dislocating emphasis; but he has a vague idea that, applied to the death of a disagreeable, fat man of seventy-five, whom nobody cared about, it is humbug; only that is not a word to be uttered in a cemetery; so he says—

“M'ria, that's rather flowery, aint it?”

But Maria has so much simple faith in the mere word Hallelujah, that she is silent, and shakes her head with an air of piety which crushes her husband, who feels that religion is a matter in which women must have their own way—a sort of serious addition to the housekeeping. In the subtler undercurrents of ethical assumption which really determine the shape life takes in the Village, and all similar Villages, it is held the privilege and dignity of the male human animal to drink and swear and swagger and be kept in reserve by the milder female as a bugbear to frighten the children with; “You behave yourself, Henry Adolphus, or else I'll tell your father, sir.” Women, being weaker and more pusillanimous, are permitted to frighten themselves with

"religion," and to dilute their food with tea. The reader perhaps knows whether kindred moral assumptions are at all influential in other places.

After all, it is very hazardous to generalise in ethical matters—different people do take similar things so differently. Cherry once confided to me, with her usual frankness and volubility, her impressions upon this subject. "Folks differ so," said she; "there's Church people, and Cumbersome Christians, and Quakers, and curly hair, and straight hair, and people that can spell properly, and people that never could, not if they was to swallow a dictionary! There's a show in the Village where there's a baby with three legs. Look at chimney-pots. Why should they be made so different? But there's such varieties of things in Nature, you never know where you are; I suppose it's because landlords have such a variety of dispositions. Characters are different, and chimney-pots are different." Cherry is quite right. Some of the things which I have seen in the Village simply shock me over again for the thousandth time with the great puzzle of human misery; I feel helpless in presence of so much that is horrible, and the only resolution which I am enabled to form is to go and do my duty better as it arises in little demands upon me from day to day. But others, I find, are affected in quite a different way. They are touched, not in their hearts, or even their imaginations, but in their heads and their theories. They just collate the facts in presence of a remembered doctrine, and—walk on the other side. One day, in Shoemakers' Village, I came across Mr. Shears, an enlightened tailor, a man with a Birkbecky mind, native to the spot, I believe, and I uttered some passing exclamations of disgust at the things which I could see, hear, and (to be candid) smell, and, generally, at the large quantity of preventible misery there was in the world. My enlightened tailor went off in the most wooden manner into "the greatest 'appiness of the greatest number." The hearty admission from me that Bentham was a very great reformer, and that I should like to set him and Franklin down together in the Village, with a Peabody purse behind them, to put it all to rights, did not stop the current of his droning talk about the greatest 'appiness. While we stood talking, the tail of a poor but multitudinously-attended funeral came up, and marched, in Indian file, into the public-house, the rear being brought up by a wretched woman with a black eye, surrounded by inches of extravasation, to which she was holding a dirty white rag, while her husband was threatening and cursing at a rate I never heard exceeded in all my life.

"That's a horrible sight," said I; "in order to set straight what is wrong in the little spectacle now before us, we should surely need to summon the whole army of divinely-gifted or best-cultivated human creatures. The doctor to cure and cleanse those squalid, sickly wretches; the divine prophet to quicken their torpid souls; the moralist to teach them decency; the gentle, high-born, wise lady to soothe their brutal natures; the poet to sing to them; the musician to play to them." My tailor was not in the least moved from his own line. The prophet, the poet, the divine sweet woman, the musician, were not at all in his way, and I left him droning about "those sanitary laws," and "the greatest 'appiness of the greatest number."

I am not crying up any weak, exclamatory, excitable way of looking at

sad and horrible things. I know very well that a surgeon may use the knife with the nerve of a lion and the tenderness of a mother. But some people are so *wooden*. Which is the more irritating of the two—that insensibility to the mystery and wonder of things which shows itself in a wooden irreceptiveness of beauty and pathos, or that which shows itself in a wooden insusceptibility to what is horrible and preternatural in the shames, abominations, and distresses of life? I do not know. To one man a primrose by the river's brim is a yellow primrose and nothing more; to another man, brother to the first, a brutal quarrel is a fight, and nothing more—while you and I find in it a hint of hell, can smell the sulphur and see the fire.

IV.

It must not be supposed that the religious opportunities of Shoemakers' Village are confined to what the existence of a cemetery within a walk can afford. Perhaps a Comtist would think that even this was something—especially for those *prolétaires* in whom Comte had such almost unlimited faith. But the fact is that these obscure little streets, smelling like cinder-heaps too often, are sprinkled with the sound of church-bells, and within a very possible circuit there is an Independent chapel, as well as a Particular Baptist chapel, and both are well attended, though the villagers most affect the latter. From the village streets, at the proper hours on Sundays, emerge smug little boys and girls, with bags or books, who are bound for Sunday-school. These children mostly go to chapel; and, seeing the unmistakable chapel look they have about them, I have been much amused sometimes at what happens in the street when a stout, puffy, old gentleman, or stiff old lady, fresh from church, comes across a loitering group of these little ones. "Hah, hah!" says the old person, benignantly waving a stick or a gloved hand, "so you've been to church; been to church, have you?" At this the children look sheepish, colour up, and stand still, eyeing each other with glances of inquiry. As soon as ever the old person is out of sight or sound, they burst into subdued laughter, with their hands at their little mouths—because it is not proper to laugh aloud "in the streets of a Sunday,"—they are immensely tickled with the humour of its being supposed that they go to church—they! But they do not quite see how to deal with the situation from the high moral point of view. The old person so heartily presumes *church* that the little girls of the party feel as if there would be a sort of insolence in saying "No; we've been to chapel, sir." And then, again, the boys have a vague terror of the beadle—with whom, for what they know, this old person may be in constant communication. You must know these sturdy, high-principled, little nonconformists do not cherish reverential feelings towards "Church." They feel, however obscurely, that there is a sort of "I-can-do-your-dadds" opposition between Dissent and Clerisy, which might at any moment break out in punching heads. Once, indeed, these very boys—quite in a disinterested spirit of testimony, of course—made a noisy little rush into the church-porch during the time of a week-day service, and brought out the beadle, hot, hatless, and armed with

a cane. Since that event, which lingers in their memories, and haunts their consciences, they regard Church with mingled and scarcely definable sentiments, so that they are naturally shy of the subject, not knowing what retributive animosity may linger in the minds of any of the Church's adherents. That old person, for example, may be in league with the clergyman and the beadle. He may know all about that raid into the church-porch. His design may be to entrap these young people into a confession of nonconformity, and then make an *auto-da-fé* on the spot.

Sunday-school children in the Village, as well as elsewhere, are the conductors of a good deal of religious sentiment to quarters which it would otherwise never reach at all. Many a rough fellow who has a dogged, rebellious dislike of the idea of going to chapel or church himself, who would look upon it as not being game, as giving in, as doing something fit only for women and children, has a kind of superstitious awe of those who do go to places of worship, and is to be seen subdued and serious in their presence, as if he fancied they had brought away something fetish from the sacred place. If his children go to Sunday-school, he experiences a compunctious curiosity about what they are taught there. Assuming airs of paternal superiority, while he is really quaking in his heart, he listens to their Sunday-school prattle, and sometimes, perhaps, ask them leading questions about what they have learnt; or he smokes his pipe, and listens in half-sullen, half-gentle wonder.

Besides the Church, and the Independent chapel, and Zoar, the Particular Baptist chapel, the Village proper, the Willage, had opportunities within its own boundaries. The Zoar chapel people set up, several years ago, a Sunday-school in an obscure corner of the village itself, catching in that manner a great many stray children who would never go to the larger school situated at a distance. On the Sunday evenings this schoolroom was turned into a chapel. The walls were simply whitewashed; the only ornaments being square slips of paper, on which were printed texts out of the Bible, such as "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,"—"Suffer the little children to come unto me,"—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,"—"Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord." The forms had no backs to them at first, and the general effect, on a hot summer evening in particular, was rather close and gassy. Uneasy as I always am until I have thoroughly explored any place to which I am introduced, I have been myself to this preaching-station, and sat out the service. I have had for my next neighbour on the bench a working-man, whose clothes smelt so strongly of varnish as to make me half sick—a cabinet-maker, you see, who had only one suit of clothes. Once, too, I handed the open hymn-book, without looking particularly at it, to a poor young woman who sat next to me, and happened to be glancing the other way, as she accepted it. She did not sing, and when, after a few seconds, I did turn round, I noticed that the book was upside down, and that the only expression on the young woman's face was an agony of fatuity, which plainly enough proclaimed that she could not read.

The active spirit at this preaching-station was Woods—whom we have

already met as "Teacher." He was a Scotchman, but with none of the Scotch accent, and only just the Scotch emphasis, and the Scotch trick of finishing a sentence with a rising inflection. He had a wild and fiery shock of sandy hair, a gauntly-built figure—

"His shoulders broad, his arms lang"

—like Jock-o'-Hazeldean's, and a very soft, quiet, serious manner. He always walked straight on like a machine, like a stage ghost, or as if he were being blown along by an unswerving gale of wind. There was a rumour that Woods's knees were like the Apostle Peter's—callous with perpetual kneeling; but this could not be true, considering his active habits. Certain it is, however, that his face had a serious tenderness in it, which is never seen on a human countenance except during or immediately after a time of devotion. This expression of countenance has been called "the family likeness of the children of God." In Woods's case it had the happy distinction of being unadulterated by that conscious complacency which so often makes it questionable in its immediate influence upon others. Woods was a striking illustration of what is generally—I sorrowfully admit, not always—true, namely, that if a man have only a certain amount of strength and purity of character, if, in a word, he can make himself believed in, he may defy very intimate and peculiar prejudices in the circles to which he belongs. Thus, on the secular evenings, I have heard Woods, in that hot little room of his, give Readings of a kind which I am very sure Zoar chapel did not like; but the voice of Zoar did not rise even from a whisper to a murmur—the character of this good young man carried all before it.

His chief fault was that he seemed to think every human being was bound to be a Sunday-school teacher, and join in "the work," as he called it. He always said "*the* work," as if there were no other. He was apt to look a little coldly upon other serious people who, having any scraps of leisure, would not join in "the work;" and he was gravely displeased, for example, with myself for declining. I told him plainly, that for various reasons I could not join him; that I had my *own* "work;" to do which properly required more than all my strength; that I thought a Sunday-school by no means an unmixed good; that, for instance, it seemed to me a very bad thing to force the children to keep quiet in mind and limb, stewed up in such a hot hole for so long a time twice a day, and then, very likely, march the poor little wretches to chapel afterwards. Mr. Woods did not quite like this; but we must not be hard upon such a man because he had, in one direction at least, a narrow imagination, and could not discern that there are ten thousand thousand ways of doing God's "work" in the world. It is next to impossible for any man to ally himself heart and soul with any mode of action, and *not* to contract special prejudices. The man of science, or the historian, for example, too often treats the pursuits of others as if there were nothing in the world like his particular "leather." On one point Woods and I came heartily together. I happened one day to say that so long as a single human being had no bread, I thought I had only a provisional right to butter; holding that right by this tenure only, namely, that I did my best (in my own way) to help the bread

less to get bread—and butter too, in time. "Say that again," said Woods, slowly and attentively, and I repeated my confession of faith, to his great satisfaction, and he has, I dare say, never forgotten it.

Besides his activities in teaching and preaching proper, Woods was an active district-visitor. He was employed in town during the day, but in the summer evenings you might see his gaunt yet quiet figure moving through the least-enticing parts of the Village on errands of kindness or consolation. Or, through an imperfectly-curtained window, you might catch a glimpse of his sandy shock head of hair at a bedside, his lips moving, and his hands waving in a rhythmic manner, which suggested that he was repeating a hymn, or, at least, verse of some kind. Woods had a genuine taste in matters of poetry, and had his ideas, not bad ones I assure you, about Wordsworth and Tennyson. It would have done you good to assist at the little æsthetic battles between him and that scapegrace, Jack Evans (Jack Evans's the villagers called him) who, with all the characteristics of the traditional medical student, and never free from the odour of stale tobacco, was a hanger-on at Zoar. What lugubrious devoutness Jack brought to chapel on Sundays and to the secular-day prayer-meetings! How close he always managed to seat himself to Mrs. Padbury, a simple-hearted, rabbit-faced widow woman, reputed to have a little property! How he used to haunt and pester Woods, and tell him over and over again that he wanted to "join,"—preposterously unaware that the brand of Amalek was on him, and that a bear in a poultry-yard would not have been more out of place than he would be in our Zion! Woods used to be much entertained, too, with Jack's ideas of poetry. Jack was not to my knowledge an Irishman; but his poetic taste was Irish, and all his leanings were backwards. Nothing could ever drag him further forward into the nineteenth century than Bulwer-Lytton—and I rather think that, even with Bulwer, he stopped at *Eugene Aram*. Gentle Mrs. Padbury he used to terrify and subdue to distant awe by quoting Dr. Johnson—to whom, it is to be feared, he attributed some speeches which, considered metaphysically, were anomalies, and, considered chronologically, anachronisms. Woods he could not impose upon, but he amused him.

"Ah, Woods! we want nature in poetry—*nature*!

'You may break, you may shatter the vawse, if you will,
But the scent of the roses will cling to it still!'

That's poetry! Talk about Tennyson? There's *sentiment*! There's *language*! You never have that style now-a-days . . . Ah! . . . Well, well, every man to his taste . . . Good-bye, good-bye, God bless you, dear boy!"

And off he would go, humming "Ah, perdona!" in *Norma*, or the hunting-song in *Der Freischütz*. These high-strung phrases of affection at parting were apparently a conversational necessity with Jack Evans. It might be tolerably certain that you would see him again to-morrow; he was only going two miles off, perhaps; but he would say his farewell as if he were outward-bound for the Cannibal Islands.

(To be continued.)

ON THE BRIDGE AT POISSY.

THE nightingales were singing
 At Poissy on the Seine,
 As I leant above the River,
 Flooded high with summer rain.
 Dear is that royal River,
 With ceaseless, noiseless flow,
 Past the grey towers of Paris
 From the woods of Fontainebleau!

The nightingales were singing
 In the rosy sunset air,
 The silver chimes were ringing,
 "Christians, come to prayer!"
 And I thought the invitation
 Utter'd ever, eve and morn,
 Was the voice of good St. Louis
 In the town where he was born!

As I leant above the River,
 Musing softly all alone,
 The bells and birds together
 Seem'd blended into one;—
 The rapturous thrill of nature,
 So soulless, yet so fair,
 Borne up upon the wing'd chimes,
 "Christians, come to prayer!"

Fair is the Seine at Poissy,
 With its islets crown'd by trees,
 Fringed by spires of lofty poplars
 Trembling in the summer breeze.
 Fair is the antique City,
 And its Church as white as snow,
 Built and blessed by good St. Louis,
 Built and blessed so long ago!

Louis, being dead, yet liveth
 By the waters of the Seine,
 Where he trod, his kingdom blossom'd,
 Where he built, his stones remain,
 Where he knelt, his pious accents
 Linger softly on the air;
 Join, sweet birds, your invitation!
 "Christians, come to prayer!"

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES.

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART I.—HIS BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER VI.

ROBERT TO THE RESCUE!

THE relation between Shargar and Robert was a somewhat singular one.

That he was a parish scholar—which means that the parish paid his fees, although, indeed, they were hardly worth paying—made very little difference to his position. Nor did the fact of his being ragged and dirty affect his social reception to his discomfort. But the accumulated facts of the oddity of his personal appearance, his imputed imbecility, and the bad character borne by his mother, placed him in a very unenviable relation to the tyrannical and vulgar-minded amongst his fellows. As to his person, he was long, and, as his name implied, lean, with pale-red hair, reddish eyes, no visible eyebrows or eyelashes, and a very pale face—in fact, he was half-way to an Albino. His arms and legs seemed of equal length, both exceedingly long. The handsomeness of his mother appeared only in his nose and mouth, which were regular and good, though expressionless; and the birth of his father only in his small delicate hands and feet, of which any girl who cared only for smallness, and heeded neither character nor strength, might have been proud. His feet, however, were supposed to be enormous, from the difficulty with which he dragged after him the huge shoes in which they were encased.

The imbecility, like the large feet, was only imputed. He certainly was not brilliant, but neither did he make a fool of himself in any of the few branches of learning of which the parish-scholar came in for a share. That which gained him the imputation was the fact that his nature was without a particle of the aggressive, and all its defensive was of as purely negative a character as possible. Had he been a dog, he would never have thought of doing anything for his own protection beyond turning up his four legs in silent appeal to the mercy of the heavens. He was an absolute sepulchre in the swallowing of oppression and ill-usage. It vanished in him. There was no echo of complaint, no murmur of resentment from the hollows of that soul. The blows that fell upon him resounded not, and no one but God remembered them.

His mother made her living as she herself best knew, with occasional well-begrudged assistance from the parish. Her chief resource was no doubt begging from house to house for the handful of oatmeal which was the recognized, and, in the court of custom-taught conscience, the legalized dole upon which every beggar had a claim; and if she picked up at the same time a chicken, or a boy's rabbit, or any other stray luxury, she was only following

her gipsy nature. Her worst fault was the way she treated her son, whom she starved apparently that she might continue able to beat him.

The particular occasion which led to the recognition of the growing relation between Robert and Shargar was the following. Upon a certain Saturday, on which some sidereal power inimical to boys must have been in the ascendant—a Saturday of brilliant but intermittent sunshine, the white clouds seen from the school windows indicating by their rapid transit across those fields of vision that fresh breezes friendly to kites, or dragons, as they were always called there, were frolicking in the upper regions—nearly a dozen boys were kept in for not being able to pay down from memory the usual instalment of Shorter Catechism always due at the close of the week. Amongst these boys were Robert and Shargar. Sky-revealing windows and locked door were too painful; and in proportion as the feeling of having nothing to do increased, the more uneasy did the active element in the boys become, and the more ready to break out into some abnormal manifestation. Everything—sun, wind, clouds—was busy out of doors, and calling to them to come and join the fun; and activity at the same moment excited and restrained naturally turns to mischief. Most of them had already learned the obnoxious catechism—one quarter of an hour was enough for that—and now what should they do next? The eyes of three or four of the eldest of them fell simultaneously upon Shargar.

Robert was sitting plunged in one of his day-dreams, for he, too, had learned his catechism, and had nothing more to do, when he was roused from his reverie by a question from a pale-faced little boy, who looked up to him as a great authority:

“What for’s ‘t ca’d the *Shorter* Carritchis, Bob?”

“‘Cause it’s no fully sae lang’s the Bible,” answered Robert, without having given the question the consideration due to it, and was proceeding to turn the matter over in his mind, when the mental process was arrested by a shout of laughter. The boys had taken Shargar’s feet, and tied them to the desk at which he sat—likewise his hands, at full stretch; then, having attached about a dozen strings to as many elf-locks of his pale-red hair, which was never cut or trimmed, they had tied them to various pegs in the wall behind him, so that the poor fellow could not stir. They then began to crush up pieces of waste paper, not a few leaves of stray school-books being regarded in that light, into bullets, which they dipped in ink and aimed at Shargar’s face.

For some time Shargar did not utter a word; and Robert, although somewhat indignant at the treatment he was receiving, felt as yet no impulse to interfere, for success was doubtful. But, indeed, he was never very easily roused to action of any kind; for he was as yet mostly in the larva-condition of character, when everything is transacted inside. But the fun grew more furious, and spot after spot of ink gloomed upon Shargar’s white face. Still Robert took no notice, for they did not seem to be hurting him much. But at last he saw the tears stealing down his patient face, making channels through the ink which now nearly covered it, and he could bear it no longer. He took out his knife, and under pretence of joining in the sport, drew near

to Shargar, and, with rapid hand, cut the cords in a moment—all but those that bound his feet.

The boys turned upon Robert for spoiling their sport. But ere they came to more than abusive words, a diversion took place.

Mrs. Innes, the schoolmaster's wife—a stout kind-hearted woman, the fine condition of whose temperament was clearly the result of her physical prosperity—appeared at the door which led to the dwelling-house above, bearing in her hands a large tureen of potato-soup, for her motherly heart could not longer endure the thought of dinnerless boys; and as her husband was engaged at a parish meeting, she took the opportunity of interfering.

But ere Nancy, the servant, could follow with the spoons, Wattie Morrison had taken the tureen, and out of spite at Robert, had emptied its contents on the head of Shargar, who was still tied by the feet, with the words: "Shargar, I anoint thee king over us, and here is thy crown," giving the tureen a push on to his head as he said so, where it remained.

For one moment, Shargar could not speak, but the next he gave a shriek that made Robert think he was far worse scalded than turned out to be the case. He darted to him in a rage, took the tureen from his head, and, his blood being fairly up now, flung it with all his force at Morrison, and felled him to the earth. At the same moment the master entered by the street door, and his wife by the house door, which were directly opposite, and there they stood staring at each other across the group surrounding the fallen tyrant, on the outskirts of which Robert, with the red face of wrath, and Shargar, with a complexion the mingled result of tears, ink, and soup, which latter clothed him from head to foot besides, completed the picture. I need not follow the story farther. Both Robert and Morrison *got a lickin'*; and if Mr. Innes had been like some schoolmasters of those times, Shargar would not have escaped his share of the evil things going.

From that day Robert assumed the acknowledged position of Shargar's defender. And if there was pride and a sense of property mingled with his advocacy of Shargar's rights, nay, even if the relation was not altogether free from some amount of show-off on Robert's part, yet I cannot help thinking that it had its share in that development of the character of Falconer which has chiefly attracted me to the office of his biographer. There may have been in it the exercise of some patronage; probably it was not pure from the pride of beneficence; but at least it was a loving patronage and an active beneficence, and, under the reaction of these, the good which in Robert's nature was as yet only in a state of solution began to crystallize into character.

But the effect on Shargar was more remarkable than that on Robert. As incapable of self-defence as ever, he was yet in a moment roused to fury by any attack upon the person or the dignity of Robert: so that, indeed, it became a new and favourite mode of teasing Shargar to heap abuse, real or pretended, upon his friend. For from the day when Robert thus espoused his part, Shargar was Robert's dog. That very evening, when she went to take a parting peep at the external before locking the door for the night, Betty found him sitting upon the door-step, only, however, to send him off,

as she described it, "wi' a flech in 's lug (*a flea in his ear*)."
For the character of the mother was always associated with the boy, and avenged upon him; although I must allow that those delicate dirty fingers of his could not with safety be warranted from occasional picking and stealing.

At this period of my story, Robert was rather a grotesque-looking animal; very tall and lanky, with especially long arms, which excess of length they retained after he was full-grown. In this respect Shargar and he were alike; but the long legs of Shargar were unmatched in Robert, for at this time his body was peculiarly long. He had large black eyes, deep sunk even then, and a Roman nose, the size of which in a boy of his years looked portentous. At school his nickname was *Nosy*.

For the rest, he was dark-complexioned, with dark hair destined to grow darker still. His hands and feet were well modelled, but would have made four feet and four hands such as Shargar's. When his mind was not oppressed with the consideration of any important metaphysical question, he earned his lessons well; when such was present, the Latin grammar, with all its attendant servilities, was driven from the presence of the lordly need. That once satisfied in spite of pandies and imprisonments, he returned with fresh zest, and, indeed, with some ephemeral ardour, to the rules of syntax or prosody, though the latter, in the mode in which it was then and there taught, was almost as useless as the task set himself by a worthy lay-preacher in the neighbourhood—of learning the first nine chapters of the first Book of Chronicles, in atonement for having, in an evil hour of freedom of spirit, ventured to suggest that such lists of names, even although forming a portion of Holy Writ, could scarcely be reckoned of equally Divine authority with St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ANGEL UNAWARES.

ALTHOUGH Betty seemed to hold little communication with the outer world she yet contrived somehow or other to bring home what gossip was going to the ears of her mistress, who had very few visitors; for, while her neighbours held Mrs. Falconer in great and evident respect, she was not the sort of person to sit down and have a *news* with. There was a certain sedate self-contained dignity about her which the common mind felt to be chilling and repellant; and from any gossip of a personal nature—what Betty brought her always excepted—she would turn away, generally with the words, "Hoots! I canna bide clashes."

On the evening following that of Shargar's introduction to Mrs. Falconer's house, Betty came home from the butcher's—for it was Saturday night, and she had gone to fetch the beef for their Sunday's broth—with the news that the people next door, that is, round the corner in the next street, had a visitor. The house in question had been built by Robert's father, and was, compared with Mrs. Falconer's one-story-house, large and handsome. Robert had been born in it, although he was not able to recall more than a very few isolated facts of the early days he spent there. Some years before the

period at which my history commences, it had passed into other hands, so that the house was now quite strange to him, and he felt no involuntary associations arising in connection with it, partly, no doubt, from being so familiar with the outside appearance of it. It had been bought by a retired naval officer, who lived it with his wife—the only Englishwoman in the place, until the arrival, at the Boar's Head, of the lady so much admired by Dooble Sanny.

Robert was upstairs when Betty emptied her news-bag, and so heard nothing of this bit of gossip. He had just promised Shargar that as soon as his grandmother was asleep he would look about for what he could find, and carry it up to him in the garret; for he had steadfastly resisted the expenditure of more than twopence out of Shargar's shilling.

The household retired very early—earlier on Saturday night in preparation for the Sabbath, and by ten o'clock every one was in bed. Robert had lain down in his clothes, waiting till such time as he might hope that his grandmother was asleep, impatient both to ease Shargar's hunger and to get to sleep himself. Several times he got up, resolved to make his attempt; but as often his courage failed, and he lay down again, sure that grannie could not be asleep yet. But when the clock beside him struck eleven, he could bear it no longer, and rose to do his endeavour.

Opening the door of the closet very softly, he crept upon his hands and knees into the middle of the parlour, feeling very much like a thief, as, indeed, in a measure he was, though from a blameless motive. There he was arrested and fixed with terror; for a deep sigh came from grannie's bed, followed by the voice of words. He thought at first she had heard him, but he soon found that he was mistaken. Still, the fear of discovery held him there on all-fours, while she went on. A dull red gleam, faint and dull, from the embers of the fire, was the sole light in the room. Everything so common to his eyes in the daylight seemed now strange and eerie in the dying coals, and at what appeared to the boy the unearthly hour of the night.

He felt that he ought not to listen to grannie, but the terror of being discovered kept him fixed where he was.

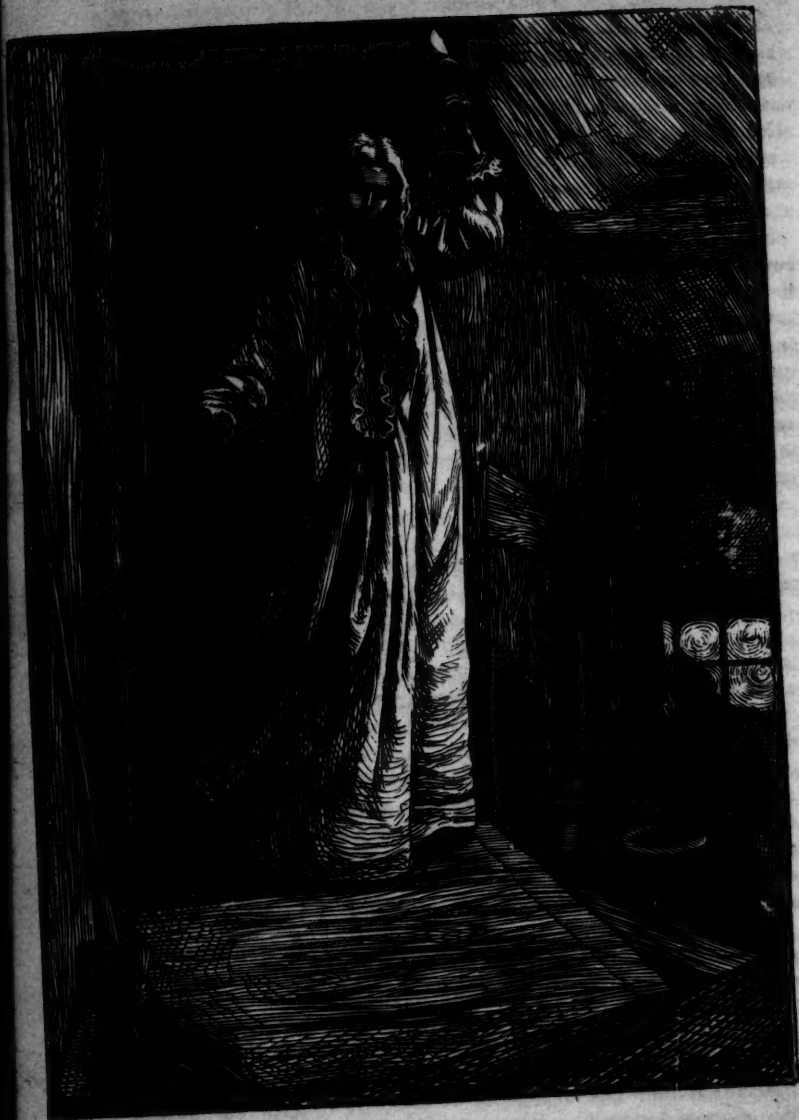
"Och hone! och hone!" said grannie, from the bed. "I've a sair, sair hert. I've a sair hert i' my breist, O Lord! thoo knowest. My ain Anerew! To think o' my bairnie that I cairriet i' my ain body, that sookit my breists, and leuch i' my face—to think o' 'm turnin' reprobate! O Lord! culdna he be eleckit yet? Is there *nae* turnin' o' thy decrees? Na, na; that wadna do at a'. But while there's life there's houp. But wha kens whether he be alive or no? Naeboddy can tell. Gladly wad I luik upon 's deid face gin I culd believe that his sowl wasna amang the lost. But eh! the torments o' that place! and the reik that gangs up for ever an' ever, smorin' the stars! And my Anerew doon i' the hert o' 't cryin'! And me no able to win till him! O Lord! I *canna* say thy will be done. But dinna lay 't to my chairge; for gin ye was a mither yersel', ye wadna pit him there. O Lord! I'm verra ill-fashioned. I beg yer pardon. I'm near oot o' my min'. Forgie me, O Lord! for I hardly ken what I'm sayin'. He was my ain babe, my ain Anerew, and ye gae him to me yersel'. And noo he's for the finger o'

scorn to pint at; an ootcast and a wan'erer fra his ain country, and daurna come within sicht o' 't for them 'at wad tak' the law o' 'm. An' it's 'a drink—drink an' ill company! He wad hae dune weel eneuch gin they wad only hae latten him be. What for maun men be aye drink-drinkin' at something or ither? I never want it. Eh! gin I war as young as whan he was born, I wad be up an' awa' this verra nicht to luik for him. But it's no use me tryin' 't. O God! ance mair I pray thee to turn him frae the error o' 's ways afore he goes hence an' isna more. And O dinna lat Robert gang efter him, as he's like eneuch to do. Gie me grace to haud him ticht, that he may be to the praise o' thy glory for ever an' ever. Amen."

Whether it was that the weary woman here fell asleep, or was too tired to speak aloud, Robert heard no more, though he remained there frozen with horror for minutes after his grandmother had ceased. This, then, was the reason she would never speak about his father! She kept all her thoughts about him for the silence of the night, and loneliness with the God who never sleeps but watches the wicked all through the dark. And his father was one of the wicked! And God was against him! And when he died, he would go to hell! But he was not dead yet: Robert was sure of that. And when he grew a man, he would go and seek him, and beg him on his knees to repent and come back to God, who would forgive him then, and take him to heaven when he died. And there he would be good, and good people would love him.

Something like this passed through the boy's mind ere he moved to creep from the room. He had almost forgotten what he came there for; and had it not been that he had promised Shargar, he would have crept back to his bed and let him bear his hunger as best he could. But now, first his right hand, then his left knee, like any other quadruped, he crawled to the door, rose only to his kness to open it, took nearly a minute to the operation, then dropped and crawled again, till he had turned and drawn the door to, leaving it slightly ajar. Then it struck him for the first time that the same terrible passage must be crawled through again. But he rose to his feet, and walked to the kitchen, gathering courage now, for he had no shoes on, and there was little danger of making any noise although it was pitch dark—he knew the house so well. There he groped about, but could find nothing beyond a few *quarters* of oat-cake, which, with a mug of water, he proceeded to carry up to Shargar in the garret.

The moment he reached the kitchen-door, he was struck with amazement and fear. A light was shining into the transe from the stair which went up at right angles from the end of it. Being a boy of considerable courage, however, he did not hesitate; for he knew it could not be grannie, and he heard Betty snoring in her own den, which opened from the kitchen. He thought it might be Shargar who had got impatient; but how he could have got hold of a light he could not think. As soon as he turned the corner, there, at the top of the broad low flight of steps, stood a woman, gazing about her as if wondering which way to go, and holding the candle as high as her head that she might see the better. The light, therefore, fell full upon her face, the beauty of which was such that, taken with her dress, which was white, being,



"ROBERT FALCONER."

in fact, a nightgown—a garment which Robert had never before seen—and her hair, which was hanging loose about her shoulders and down to her waist, it led Robert at once to the conclusion (his reasoning faculties already shaken by the events of the night) that it was an angel come down to comfort his grannie; and he kneeled involuntarily at the foot of the stair, and gazed up at her, with the cakes in one hand, and the mug of water in the other, like a meat-and-drink offering. Whether he had closed his eyes or bowed his head, he could not say; but he became suddenly aware that the angel had vanished—he knew not when, how, or whither. This for the time confirmed his assurance that it was an angel. And although he was undeceived before very long, the impression made upon him that night was never effaced; for whatever Falconer heard or saw was something more to him than it seemed to be to anybody else.

Elated, though awed, by the vision, he felt his way up the stair with his feet, for both hands were occupied—trod as if upon holy ground as he crossed the landing where the angel had stood—went up and up, and found Shargar wide awake with expectant hunger. He, too, had seen the light—as much of it, that is, as came up the stair. But Robert did not tell him what he had seen. That was too sacred a subject to enter upon with Shargar, who was intent enough upon his dry supper not to be inquisitive about the matter.

Robert left him to finish it at his leisure, and returned to cross his grandmother's room once more, half expecting to find the angel standing by her bedside. But all was dark and still. God had sent her sleep in the meantime, and perhaps the angel would come by and by. Creeping back as he had come, he heard her quiet, though deep, breathing, and his mind was at ease about grannie for the night. What if the angel he had surprised had only come to appear to grannie in her sleep? Why not? There were such stories in the Bible, and grannie was certainly as good as some of the people in the Bible that saw angels—Sarah, for instance. And if the angels came to see grannie, why should they not have some care over his father as well? It might be—who could tell? He would hope it was so, and go to sleep in comfort.

It is perhaps necessary to explain Robert's vision. The Angel was the owner of the boxes which he had seen at the Boar's Head, to the praises of whose beauty he had listened at its archway. While examining her room before going to bed, she had discovered a trap in the floor near the wall, and under it a few steps of a stair leading down to a door, which curiosity naturally led her to examine. She found it locked, but the key was in the lock. The door opened outwards, and there was she, to her surprise, in the heart of another dwelling, of lowlier aspect than that in which she had taken up her abode. She made a short survey from the landing, but never saw Robert; for, while he approached with shoeless feet she had been looking up the garret stair, and while he knelt, the light which she held so high in her hand had, I suppose, cast the shadow of the broad candlestick over him. He, on his part, had never observed that that door stood open at last.

I have already said that the house adjoining had been built by Robert's father. The lady's room was that which he had occupied with his wife, and in which Robert had been born. This door, with its trap-stair, had been a natural invention for uniting the levels of the two houses, and a desirable one in not a few of the forms which the weather assumed in that region. Nor when the house passed into other hands, had it ever entered into the minds of the simple people who occupied the contiguous dwellings, that the doorway between ought to be built up.

CHAPTER VIII.

A DISCOVERY.

THE friendship of Robert had gained Shargar the favourable notice of others of the school-public, principally from amongst those who came from the country, and were ready to follow an example set them by a town boy. When his desertion was known, these, moved both by their compassion for him, and their respect for Robert, began to give him some portion of the dinner which they always brought with them; and never in his life had Shargar fared so well as for the first week after he had been cast upon the world. But in proportion as their interest faded with the novelty, so their appetites reasserted former claims of use and wont, and Shargar began once more to feel the pangs of hunger. For all that Robert could manage to procure for him without attracting the attention he was so anxious to avoid, was little more than sufficient to keep his hunger alive, seeing Shargar was gifted with a great appetite. Robert had no allowance of pocket-money from his grandmother. The few pence he had been able to spend on Shargar were all that remained of sixpence Mr. Innes had given him for an exercise which he wrote in blank verse instead of in prose—an achievement of which the schoolmaster was proud, both from his reverence for Milton, and his utter inability to compose a metrical line himself. And how or when he should ever possess another penny was even unimaginable. Shargar's shilling was likewise soon spent. So Robert went on pocketing instead of eating all that he dared, watching anxiously for opportunity of evading the eyes of his grandmother, on whose dimness of sight, however, he depended too confidently after all; for either she was not so blind as he thought she was, or she made up for the defect of her vision by the keenness of her observation. What she saw caused her considerable annoyance, though it suggested nothing inconsistent with rectitude on the part of the boy, further than that there was something underhand going on. One supposition after another rose in the old lady's brain, and one after another was dismissed as improbable. First, she tried to persuade herself that he wanted to take the provisions to school with him, and eat them there—a proceeding of which she certainly did not approve, but for the reproof of which she was unwilling to betray the loopholes of her eyes. Next she concluded, for half a day, that he must have a pair of rabbits hidden away in some nook or other—possibly in the little strip of garden belonging to the house. And so conjecture followed conjecture for a whole week, during which, strange to say, not even Betty knew that

Shargar slept in the house. For so careful and watchful were the two boys, that although she could not help suspecting something from the expression and behaviour of Robert, what it might be she could not imagine; nor had she and her mistress as yet exchanged confidences on the subject. Her observation coincided with that of her mistress as to the disappearance of odds and ends of eatables—potatoes, cold porridge, bits of oatcake; and even, on one occasion, when Shargar happened to be especially ravenous, a yellow, or cured and half-dried, haddock, which the lad devoured raw, vanished from her domain. He went to school in the morning smelling so strong in consequence, that they told him he must have been passing the night in Scroggie's cart, and not on horseback this time.

But the boys kept their own secret.

One evening, towards the end of the following week, Robert, after seeing Shargar disposed of for the night, proceeded to carry out a project which had grown in his brain within the last two days, in consequence of an occurrence with which his relation to Shargar had had something to do. It was this:

The housing of Shargar in the garret had led Robert to make a closer acquaintance with the place. He was familiar with all the outs and ins of the little room which he considered his own, for that was a civilized, being a plastered, ceiled, and comparatively well-lighted little room, but not with the other, which was three times its size, very badly lighted, and showing the naked couples from roof-tree to floor; and contained, besides, a good many dark corners, with which his childish imagination had associated undefined horrors, assuming now one shape, now another. Also there were several closets in it, constructed in the angles of the place, and several chests—two of which he had ventured to peep into, and had found to be filled, not with bones, as he had expected, but one with papers, and one with garments; and no farther had he dared to carry his researches. One evening, however, when Betty was out, and he had got hold of her candle, and gone up to keep Shargar company for a few minutes, a sudden impulse seized him to have a peep into all the closets. One of them he knew a little about, as containing, amongst other things, his father's coat with the gilt buttons, and having contained his great-grandfather's kilt: now he would see what was in the rest. He did not find anything very interesting, however, till he arrived at the last. Out of this he drew a long queer-shaped box into the light of Betty's dip.

"Look here, Shargar!" he cried, under his breath, for they never dared to speak aloud in these precincts—"look here! What can there be in this box? Is't a bairnie's coffin, duv ye think? Luik at it."

In this case Shargar, having roamed the country a good deal more than Robert, and having been present at some merrymakings with his mother, of which there were comparatively few in that country-side, was better informed than his friend.

"Eh! Bob, duvna ye ken what that is? I thocht ye kent a' thing. That's a fiddle."

"That's buff an' styte (*stuff and nonsense*), Shargar. Do ye think I dinna ken a fiddle whan I see ane, wi' its guts outside o' 'ts wame, an' the thoomacks to screw them up wi' an' gar't skirl?"

"Buff an' styte yersel!" cried Shargar, in indignation, from the bed. "Gie's a haud o' 't."

Robert handed him the case. Shargar undid the hooks in a moment, and revealed the creature lying in its shell like a boiled bivalve.

"I tellt ye sae!" he exclaimed, triumphantly. "Maybe ye'll lippen to me (*trust me*) neist time."

"Losh! I min' noo. It maun be my grandfather's fiddle 'at I hae heard tell o'."

"No to ken a fiddle-case!" reflected Shargar, with as much of contempt as it was possible for him to show.

"I tell ye what, Shargar," said Robert, indignantly, "ye may ken the box o' a fiddle better nor I do, but deil hae me gin I dinna ken the fiddle itsel' rather better nor ye do in a fortnicht frae this time. I s' tak' it to Dooble Sanny; he can play the fiddle fine. An' I'll play 't too, or the deil s' be in't."

"Eh, man, that 'll be gran'!" cried Shargar, incapable of jealousy. "We can gang to a' the markets thegither and gaitther baubees."

To this anticipation Robert returned no reply, for, hearing Betty come in, he judged it time to restore the violin to its case, and take back Betty's candle to the kitchen, lest she should invade the upper regions in search of it. But that very night he managed to have an interview with *Dooble Sanny*, the shoemaker, and it was arranged between them that Robert should bring his violin on the evening at which my story has now arrived.

It was a poor motive he had for commencing the study of music; but it holds even in more important matters that, if the thing pursued be good, there is a hope of the pursuit purifying the motive. And Robert no sooner heard the fiddle begin to utter its mournful sounds in the hands of the *soutar* (*shoemaker*), who was no contemptible performer, than he longed to establish such a relation between himself and the strange instrument, that, dumb and deaf as it looked in the case, it might respond to his touch too, and tell him the secrets of its queerly-twisted skull, full of sweet sounds instead of brains. From that moment he would be a musician for music's own sake, and forgot utterly what had appeared to him, though I doubt if it was, the sole motive of his desire to learn—namely, the necessity of retaining his superiority over Shargar.

What added considerably to the excitement of his feelings on the occasion was the expression of reverence, almost awe, with which the shoemaker took the instrument from its case, and the tenderness with which he handled it. The fact was that he had not had a violin in his hands for nearly a year, having been compelled to pawn his own in order to alleviate the sickness brought on his wife by his own ill-treatment of her, once that he came home drunk from a wedding. It was strange to think that such dirty hands should be able to bring such sounds out of the instrument the moment he got it safely cuddled under his cheek. So dirty were they that it was said Dooble Sanny never required to carry any rosin with him for the fiddle's purposes, his own fingers having always enough upon them for one bow at least. Yet the points of his fingers never lost the delicacy of their touch. Some people thought this was in virtue of their being washed only once a

week—a custom Alexander justified, on the ground that, in a trade like his, it was of no use to wash oftener, for he would be just as dirty again before night.

The moment he began to play, the face of the soutar grew ecstatic. But he stopped at the very first note, took the violin from his shoulder, let fall his arms, the one with the bow, the other with the violin, at his sides, and said, with deep-drawn respiration and lengthened utterance :

“Eh!”

Then, after a pause, during which he stood motionless :

“The crater maun be a Cry Moany! Hear till her!” he said, drawing another long note.

Then, after another pause :

“She’s a Straddle Vawrious at least! Hear till her! I never had sic a combination o’ timmer and catgut atween my twa cleuks afore.”

As to its being a Stradivarius, or even a Cremona at all, the testimony of Dooble Sanny was not worth much on the point. But the shoemaker’s admiration roused in the boy’s mind a reverence for the individual instrument which he never lost.

From that day the two were friends.

Suddenly the soutar started off at full speed in a strathspey, which was soon lost in the wail of a Highland psalm-tune, giving place in its turn to “Sic a wife as Willie had!” And so he went on till Robert dared not stop any longer.

“Come as aften’s ye like, Robert, gin ye fess this lady wi’ ye,” said the fiddler.

And he stroked the back of the violin tenderly with his open palm.

“But wad ye hae ony objection to lat it lie aside ye, and lat me come whan I can?”

“Objection, laddie? I wad as sune object to latten my ain wife lie aside me.”

“Ay,” said Robert, seized with some anxiety about the violin as he remembered the fate of the wife, “but ye ken Elspet comes aff a’ the waur sometimes.”

Softened by the proximity of the wonderful violin, and stung afresh by the boy’s words, as his conscience had often stung him before, for he loved his wife dearly save when the demon of drink possessed him, the tears rose in Elshender’s eyes. He held out the violin to Robert, and, with unsteady voice, said :

“Hae, tak’ her awa’. I dinna deserve to hae sic a thing i’ my hoose. But, hear me, Robert, and lat hearin’ be believin’. I never was sae drunk but I culd tune my fiddle. Mair by token, ance they fand me lyin’ o’ my back i’ the Corrie, and the watter, they say, was ower a’ but the mou’ o’ me; but I was haudin’ my fiddle up abune my heid, and deil a spark o’ watter was upo’ her.”

“It’s a pity yer wife wasna yer fiddle, than, Sanny,” said Robert, with more presumption than wit.

“Deed ye’re i’ the richt there, Robert. Hae, tak’ yer fiddle.”

"'Deed no," returned Robert. "I maun jist lippen 't to ye, Sanders. I canna bide langer the nicht; but ye'll gie me a lesson the neist time 'at I come, will ye?"

"That I *will*, Robert, come whan ye like. An' gin ye come o' ane 'at culd play this fiddle as this fiddle deserves to be playt, ye'll do me credit."

"Ye min' what that sumph Lumley said to me the ither nicht, Sanders, aboot my grandfather?"

"Ay, weel eneuch. A dish o' drucken havers!"

"It was true eneuch aboot my great-grandfather, though."

"No! Was't really?"

"Ay. He was the best piper in 's regiment at Culloden. Gin they had a' fouchten as he playt, there wad hae been anither tale to tell. And he was toon-piper forby, jist like you, Sanders, efter they took frae him a' 'at he had."

"Na! heard ye ever the like o' that! Weel, wha wad hae thocht it? But here's the King o' Bashan comin' efter his butes, an' them no half dune yet!" said Dooble Sanny, settling in haste to his awl and his *lingel* (Fr. *lignoul*). "He'll be roarin' mair like a bull than a king."

And Robert departed as Peter Ogg came in. As he passed the window, he heard the shoemaker averring:

"I haena risen frae my stule sin' ane o'clock; but there's a sicht to be dune to them, Mr. Ogg."

Indeed, *Alexander ab Alexandro*, as Mr. Innes facetiously styled him, was in more ways than one worthy of the name of *Doble*. For there seemed to be two natures in the man, which all his music had not yet been able to blend.

CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

LITTLE did Robert dream of the reception that awaited him at home. Almost as soon as he had left the house, the following events began to take place.

The mistress's bell rang, and Betty "gaed benn the hoose to see what she culd be wantin'." Whereupon a conversation ensued.

"Wha was that at the door, Betty?" asked Mrs. Falconer; for Robert had not shut the door so carefully as he ought, seeing that the deafness of his grandmother was of much the same faculty as her blindness. Had he not had a hold of Betty, like Time, by the forelock of her years, he would have been unable to steal any liberty at all, for his grandmother depended on her to watch him when he was out of her sight. Now Betty had a conscience, and would not lie. Neither would she offend Robert.

"'Deed, mem, I canna jist distinckly say 'at I heard the door."

"Whaur's Robert?"

"He's generally up the stair aboot this hoor, mem—that is, whan he's no i' the parlour at 's lessons."

"What gangs he sae muckle up the stair for, Betty, do ye ken? It's something by ordinar' wi' 'm."

"'Deed I dinna ken, mem. I never tuik it into my heid to gang considerin' about it. He'll hae some ploy o' 's ain, nae doot. Laddies will be laddies, ye ken, mem."

"I doobt, Betty, ye'll be aidin' an' abettin'. An' it disna become yer years, Betty."

"My years are no to fin' faut wi', mem. They're weel eneuch."

"That's naething to the pint, Betty. What's the laddie about?"

"Do ye mean whan he gangs up the stair, mem?"

"Ay. Ye ken weel eneuch what I mean."

"Weel, mem, I tell ye I dinna ken. An' ye never heard me lee to ye."

"Na, nae doonricht. Ye gang about it an' about it, an' at last ye come sae near leein' that gin ye spak' anither word, ye wad be at it; and it jist fleys (*frights*) me frae speirin' ae ither queston at ye. But noo 'at it's about my ain oye (*grandson*), I'm no gaein' to tyne (*lose*) him to save a woman o' your years, wha oucht to ken better; an' sae I'll speir at ye, though ye suld be driven to lee like Satan himsel'. What's he about when he gangs up the stair? Noo!"

"Weel, as sure's death, I dinna ken. Ye drive me to sweirin', mem, an no to leein'."

"I carena. Hae ye no idea about it, than, Betty?"

"Weel, mem, I think sometimes he canna be weel, and maun hae a tod (*fox*) in's stamack, or something o' that nater. For what he eats is awfu'. An' I think whiles, he jist gangs up the stair to eat at 's ain wull."

"That jumps wi' my ain observations, Betty. Do ye think he micht hae a rabbit, or maybe a pair o' them, in some boxie i' the garret, noo?"

"And what for no, gin he had, mem?"

"What for no? Nesty stinkin' things! But that's no the pint. I aye hae to haud ye to the pint, Betty. The pint is, whether he has rabbits or no."

"Or guinea-pigs," suggested Betty.

"Weel."

"Or maybe a pup or twa. Or I kent a laddie ance 'at keepit a haill family o' kittlins. Or maybe he micht hae a bit lammie. There was an uncle o' min' ain——"

"Haud yer tongue, Betty! Ye hae ower muckle to say for a' the sense there's intil't."

"Weel, mem, ye speirt questons at me."

"Weel, I hae had eneuch o' yer answers, Betty. Gang and tell Robert to come here direkly."

Betty went, knowing perfectly that Robert had gone out, and returned with the information. Her mistress searched her face with a keen eye.

"That maun hae been himsel' efter a' whan ye thocht ye hard the door gang," said Betty.

"It's a strange thing that I suld hear him benn here wi' the door steekit, an' your door open at the verra door-cheek o' the ither, an' you no hear him, Betty. An' me sae deif as weel."

"'Deed, mem," retorted Betty, losing her temper a little, "I can be as deif's ither fowk mysel' whiles."

When Betty grew angry, Mrs. Falconer invariably grew calmer, or, at least, put her temper out of sight for the time. She was silent now till Betty moved to go to her kitchen, when she said, in the tone of one who has just arrived at an important resolution :

"Betty, we'll jist awa' up the stair and leuk."

"Weel, mem, I hae nae objections."

"Nae objections! What for suld you or ony ither body hae ony objections to me gaein' whaur I like i' my ain hoose? Umph!" exclaimed Mrs. Falconer, turning and facing her maid.

"In coorse, mem. I only meant I had nae objections to gang wi' ye."

"An' what for suld you, or ony ither woman that I paid twa pun' five i' the half-year till, daur to hae objections to gaein whaur I wantit ye to gang? I' my ain hoose, too!"

"Hoot, mem! it was a slip o' the tongue—naething mair."

"Slip me nae sic slips, or ye'll come by a fa' at last, I doobt, Betty," said Mrs. Falconer, in a mollified tone, as she led the way from the room.

They got a candle in the kitchen and proceeded upstairs, Mrs. Falconer still leading, and Betty following. They did not even look into the ga'le-room, not doubting that the dignity of the best bedroom was in no danger of being violated even by Robert, but took their way to the room in which he kept his school-books—almost the only articles of property which the boy possessed. Here they found nothing. All was in satisfactory order, even; not a very wonderful fact, seeing a few books and a slate were the only things there besides the papers on the shelves.

What the feelings of Shargar must have been when he heard the steps and voices, and saw the light approaching his place of refuge, we will not change our point of view to inquire. He certainly was as little to be envied at that moment as at any moment during the whole of his existence.

The first sense Mrs. Falconer made use of in the search after animals lay in her nose. She kept snuffing constantly, but, beyond the usual musty smell of neglected apartments, had as yet discovered nothing. The moment she entered the upper garret, however—

"There's an ill-faured smell here, Betty," she said, believing that they had at last come upon some enlightenment; "but it's no like the smell o' rabbits. Jist luik i' the neuk there ahin' the door."

"Naething here."

"Roon the en' o' that kist there. I s' luik into this press."

As Betty rose from her search behind the chest and turned towards her mistress, she saw, to her horror, a face like that of a galvanized corpse staring at her from the bed. Shargar was in a sitting posture, paralysed instead of galvanized with terror, waiting, like a fascinated bird, till Mrs. Falconer and Betty should make the final spring upon him, and do whatever was equivalent to devouring him upon the spot.

"I didna say *whusky*, did I?" he kept repeating to himself, in utter imbecility of fear.

"The Lord preserve 's!" exclaimed Betty, the moment she could speak; for during the first few seconds, having caught the infection of Shargar's expression, she stood equally paralysed. "The Lord preserve 's!" she repeated.

"Ance is eneuch," said Mrs. Falconer, sharply, turning round to see what the cause of Betty's ejaculation might be.

I have said that she was dim-sighted. The candle they had was little better than a penny-dip. The bed was darker than the rest of the room. Shargar's face had none of the more distinctive characteristics of manhood upon it.

"Gude preserve 's!" exclaimed Mrs. Falconer in her turn: "it's a wumman!"

Poor deluded Shargar, thinking himself safer under any form than that which he actually bore, uttered no protest against the mistake, if, indeed he was capable of speech, which is doubtful. The two women flew upon him to drag him out of the bed. But, recovering his powers of motion, he sprang up and darted out between them, overturning Betty in his course.

"Ye rouch limmer!" cried Betty, from the floor, now convinced, as well as her mistress, that it was a woman. For Shargar, having found out that the way to get the most warmth from Robert's great-grandfather's kilt was to wear it in the manner for which it had been fabricated, was in the habit of fastening it round his waist before he got into bed; and the eye of Betty, as she fell, caught the swing of this portion of his attire.

"The lang-leggit jaud!" added she, rising; "I wat *she* disna carry her coats ower syde (*too long*)!"

But poor Mrs. Falconer, with sunken head, was walking towards the door in the silence of despair. Not a word more had she to say to Betty. She went slowly down the steep stair, supporting herself against the wall, her round-toed shoes creaking solemnly as she went, took refuge in the ga'le-room, and burst into a violent fit of weeping. For such depravity she was not prepared. What terrible curse hung over her family? Surely they were all reprobate from the womb, not one elected for salvation from the guilt of Adam's fall, and therefore abandoned to Satan as his natural prey, to be led captive of him at his will. She threw herself on her knees at the side of the bed, and prayed heart-brokenly. Betty heard her as she limped past on her way back to her kitchen.

Meantime Shargar had rushed into the street, and across the next street into the Crookit Wynd, terrifying Kirstan Peerie as he darted past on his bare feet; for she was very old, and the divisions betwixt the compartments of her memory had broken down, so that she said to her next neighbour Tam Rhin, with whom she was trying to gossip at the door:

"Eh, Tammas! that 'll be ane o' the slauchtert at Culloden."

Shargar never stopped till he reached his mother's deserted abode—strange instinct! He ran to earth there, like a hunted fox. Rushing at the door, forgetful of everything but refuge, he found it unlocked, and, closing it behind him, stood panting like the hart that has found the water-brooks. The owner had looked in one day to see whether the place was worth doing any-

thing to, for it was a mere outhouse, and had forgotten to do more than shut the door when he left it. Poor Shargar! Was it more or less of a refuge that the mother that bore him was not there either to welcome or curse his return? Shargar himself would have answered the question, I do believe—"Less of a refuge, by far."

"For, ye see," he would have said—in after years, at least—"a mither's a mither, be she the verra deil."

Searching about in the dark, he found a three-legged stool—the sole article unsold by the landlord, because, in fact, it had but two of the three legs left. On this he sat down and waited—for what, he could have not told, further than just "for what Robert would do;" for his faith in Robert, two years younger than himself, was simply unbounded.

While he sat there, Robert, thinking him snug in the garret, was walking home down Laird Street; and his first impulse, as he entered, was to run up and recount the particulars of his interview with Alexander. He called Shargar, as usual, in a whisper—received no reply—thought he was asleep—called louder (for he had had a penny from his grandmother that day for bringing home two pails of water for Betty, and had spent it, as he returned from the shoemaker's, upon a loaf for Shargar)—but no Shargar replied. Thereupon he went to the bed to lay hold of him and shake him. But his searching hands found no Shargar. Becoming alarmed, he ran down stairs to beg a light from Betty, for a candle was always a matter of favour.

When he reached the kitchen, he found Betty's nose as much in the air as its hooked nature would admit of. For a hook-nosed animal, she certainly was the most harmless and ovine creature in the world, but this was a case in which feminine modesty was both concerned and aggrieved. She showed her resentment in no further way, however, than that of simply returning no answer in syllable, or sound, or motion, to Robert's request. She was washing up the tea-things, and went on with her work as if she had been in absolute solitude, saving that her countenance could hardly have kept up that expression of injured dignity had such been the case. Robert plainly saw, to his great concern, that his secret had been discovered in his absence, and that probably Shargar had been expelled with contumely. But, with an instinct of facing the worst at once, which accompanied him through life, he went straight to his grandmother's parlour, to which she had by this time returned.

"Well, grandmamma," he said, trying to speak as cheerfully as he could.

Grannie's prayers had softened her a little, else she would have been as silent as Betty; for it was from her mistress that Betty had learned this mode of torturing a criminal. So she was just able to return his greeting in the words, "Weel, Robert," pronounced with a finality of tone that indicated she had done her utmost, and had nothing more to say.

"Here's a browst!" thought Robert to himself. But he could not, at this period of his life, look mischief in the face without flying at it. And sometimes that is the best mode of meeting it.

"What for willna ye speik to me, grannie? I'm no a haithen, nor yet a papist."

"Ye're waur nor baith in ane, Robert."

"Hoots! ye winna say baith, grannie," returned Robert, who, even at the age of fourteen, when once compelled to assert himself, assumed a modest superiority.

"Nane o' such impidence!" retorted Mrs. Falconer. "I wonner whaur ye learn that. But that's nae wonner. Evil communications corrupts gude mainners. Ye're a lost prodigal, Robert, like yer father afore ye. I hae jist been sittin' here thinkin' wi' mysel' whether it wadna be best for baith o' 's to lat ye gang an' reap the fruit o' yer doin's at ance; for the hard ways is the best road for transgressors. I'm no bund to keep ye."

"Weel, weel, I s' awa' to Shargar. Him and me 'ill gang on thegither better nor you an' me, grannie. He's a puir cratur, but he can stick till a body."

"What are ye haverin' aboot Shargar for, ye heepocreet loon? Ye'll no gang to Shargar, I s' warran'. Ye'll be efter that vile limmer that's turnt my honest hoose intil a sty this last fortnicht."

"Grannie, I dinna ken what ye mean."

"*She* kens, than. I sent her awa' like ane o' Samson's foxes. It's a pity there wasna a firebrand tied atween the twa o' ye."

"Preserve 's, grannie! Is 't possible ye hae ta'en Shargar for ane o' wumman-kin'?"

"I ken naething aboot Shargar, I tell ye. I ken that Betty and me tuik an ill-faured dame i' the bed i' the garret."

"Culd it be his mither?" said Robert to himself, in bewilderment; but he answered:

"Shargar *may* be a quean efter a', for onything 'at I ken to the contrary; but I aye tuik him for a loon. Faith, sic a quean as he'd mak'!"

And Robert could not resist the ludicrousness of the idea, but burst into a loud fit of laughter, which did more to reassure his grannie than any amount of protestation could have done, however she pretended to take offence at his ill-timed merriment.

Seeing his grandmother staggered, Robert gathered courage to assume the offensive.

"But, granny, hoo ever Betty, no to say you, culd hae driven oot a puir half-stervit crater like Shargar, even supposin' he oucht to hae been in coaties, and no in troosers—and the mither o' him run awa' an' left him—it's mair nor I can unnerstan'. I misdooht me sair but he's gane and droont himsel'."

Robert knew well enough that Shargar would not drown himself without bidding him good-bye at least; but he knew, too, that his grandmother could be wrought upon. Her conscience was more tender than her feelings; and this peculiarity occasioned part of the mutual non-understanding rather than misunderstanding between her grandson and herself. The first relation she bore to most that came near her was one of severity and rebuke; underneath which outside lay a warm heart, to which conscience acted the part of a somewhat capricious stoker, now quenching its heat with the cold water of duty, now stirring it up with the poker of reproach, and ever treating it as an inferior and a slave. But her conscience was, on the whole, a better friend to

her race than her heart, and, indeed, is always a better friend than a heart whose motions are undirected by it. From Falconer's accounts of her, however, I cannot help thinking that she not unfrequently took refuge in severity of tone and manner from the threatened ebullition of a feeling which she could not otherwise control, and which she was ashamed to manifest. Possibly conscience spoke more and more gently as its behests were more and more readily obeyed, until the heart began to gather courage, and at last, as in many old people, took the upper hand, which was outwardly inconvenient to one of Mrs. Falconer's temperament. Hence, in doing the kindest thing in the world, she would speak in a tone of command, even of rebuke, as if she were compelling the performance of the most unpleasant duty in the person who received the kindness. But the human heart is hard to analyse, and, indeed, will not submit quietly to the operation, however gently performed. Nor is the result at all easy to put into words. It is best shown in actions.

It may appear rather strange that Robert should be able to talk in such an easy manner to his grandmother, seeing he had been guilty of concealment, if not of deception. But she had never been so actively severe towards Robert as she had been towards her own children. To him she was wonderfully gentle for her nature, and sought to exercise the saving harshness which she still believed necessary, solely in keeping from him every enjoyment of life which the narrowest theories as to the rule and will of God could set down as worldly. Frivolity, of which there was little in this sober boy, was in her eyes a vice; loud laughter almost a crime; cards, and *novelles*, as she called them, were such, in her estimation, as to be beyond my power of characterization. Her commonest saying was, "Noo be *douce*,"—that is, sober—uttered to the soberest boy she could ever have known. But Robert was a large-hearted boy, else this life would never have had to be written; and so, through all this, his deepest nature came into unconscious contact with that of his noble old grandmother. There was nothing small about either of them. And Robert was not afraid of her. He had got more of her nature in him than of her son's. She and his own mother had more share in him than his father, though from him he inherited good qualities likewise.

He had concealed his doings with Shargar simply because he believed that they could not be done if his grandmother knew. Herein he did her less than justice. But so unpleasant was concealment to his nature, and so much did the dread of discovery press upon him, that the moment he saw the thing had come out into the daylight of her knowledge, there was such a reaction of relief as, operating along with his deep natural humour and the comical circumstances of the case, gave him an ease and freedom of communication which he had never before enjoyed with her. Likewise there was a certain courage in the boy which, if his own natural disposition had not been so quiet that he felt the negations of her rule less than he would otherwise have felt them, might have resulted in underhand doings of a very different kind, possibly, from those of benevolence.

He must have been a strange being to look at, I always think, at this point of his development, with his huge nose, his black eyes, his lanky figure, and

his sober countenance, on which a smile was rarely visible, but from which burst occasional *guffaws* of laughter.

At the words "droont himsel'," Mrs. Falconer started.

"Rin, laddie, rin," she said, "an' fess him back directly! Betty! Betty! gang wi' Robert and help him to luik for Shargar. Ye auld, blin', doited body, 'at says ye can see, an' canna tell a lad frae a lass!"

"Na, na, grannie. I'm no gaein' oot wi' a dame like her trailin' at my fut. She wad be a sair hinnerance to me. Gin Shargar be to be gotten—that is, gin he be in life—I s' get him wantin' Betty. And gin ye dinna ken him for the crater ye fand i' the garret, he maun be sair changed sin' I left him there."

"Weel, weel, Robert, gang yer wa's; but gin ye be deceivin' me, may the Lord — forgie ye, Robert, for sair ye'll need it."

"Nae fear o' that, grannie," returned Robert, from the street door, and vanished.

Mrs. Falconer stalked—No, I will not use that word with regard to the pace of a great woman like my friend's grandmother. Stately stept she butt the hoose to Betty, who, fortunately, had not heard her last remark upon her, a little uncomfortable as to how she might meet coming circumstances; for Mrs. Falconer felt strangely soft at the heart, Robert not being yet proved a reprobate. But she was not, therefore, prepared to drop one atom of the dignity of her relation to her servant.

"Betty," she said, "ye hae made a mistak'."

"What's that, mem?" returned Betty.

"It wasna a lass ava: it was that crater Shargar."

"Ye said it was a lass yersel' first, mem."

"Ye ken weel eneuch that I'm short-sichtit, an' hae been frae the day o' my birth."

"I'm no auld eneuch to min' upo' that, mem," returned Betty, revengefully, but in an undertone, as if she did not intend her mistress to hear. And her mistress adopted the subterfuge. "But I'll sweir the crater I saw was in cwyttes (*petticoats*)."

"Sweir not at all, Betty. Ye hae made a mistak' ony gait."

"Wha says that, mem?"

"Robert."

"Aweel, gin he be tellin' the trowth——"

"Daur ye mint (*insinuate*) to me that a son o' mine wad tell onything but the trowth?"

"Na, na, mem. But she did luik unco like a quean, and no a blate (*bashful*) ane eyther."

"Gin he was a loon, he wadna luik like a blate lass ony gait, Betty. And there ye're wrang."

"Weel, weel, mem, hae 't yer ain gait," muttered Betty.

"I wull hae 't my ain gait," retorted her mistress, "because it's the richt gait, Betty. An' noo we maun jist gang up the stair, an' get the place clean't oot an' put in order."

"I wull do that, mem."

"An' luik weel aboot, Betty, you that can see sae weel, in case there suld be ony cattle aboot; for he's nane o' the cleanest, yon dame!"

"I wull do that, mem."

"An' gang directly, afore he comes back."

"Wha comes back?"

"Robert, of coorse."

"What for that?"

"'Cause he 's comin' wi' 'im."

"What he 's comin' wi' him?"

"Ca' 't she, gin ye like. It's Shargar."

"Wha says that?" exclaimed Betty, sniffing and starting at once.

"I say that. An' ye gang an' du what I tell ye, this minute."

Betty obeyed instantly; for the tone in which the last words were spoken was one she was not accustomed to dispute. She only muttered as she went, "It 'll a' come upo' me as usual."

Betty's job was long done before Robert returned. Never dreaming that Shargar had gone back to the old haunt, he had looked for him everywhere before he thought of that as a last chance. Nor would he have found him even then, for he would not have thought of his being inside the deserted house, had not Shargar heard his footsteps. He started up, saying, "That's Bob," but was not sure enough to go to the door. He might be mistaken; it might be the landlord. He heard the feet stop and did not move; but when he heard them begin to go away again, he sprang from his seat in an agony, for it might be his friend, and, rushing to the door, bawled at the top of his voice, "Bob! Bob!" Finding it was Bob in very deed, he next burst out crying.

"Eh! ye crater!" said Robert, "ir ye there efter a'?"

"Eh! Bob," exclaimed Shargar, and burst into tears once more, "I thoct ye wad come efter me."

"Of coorse," answered Robert, coolly. "Come awa' hame."

"Whaur til?" asked Shargar, in dismay.

"Hame to yer ain bed at my grannie's."

"Na, na," said Shargar, hurriedly, retreating within the door of the miserable hovel. "Na, na, Bob, lad, I s' no du that. She's an awfu' wumman, that grannie o' yours. I canna think hoo ye can bide wi' her. I'm weel oot o' her grups, I can tell ye."

It did not, however, require very much persuasion on the part of Robert to induce Shargar to return; for was not Robert his tower of strength? And if Robert was not frightened at his grannie, or at Betty, why should he be? Together they entered Mrs. Falconer's parlour, Robert dragging in Shargar after him, having failed in encouraging him to enter after a more dignified fashion.

It must be remembered that Shargar was still barefooted and still kilted, but not the less trousered, such as the trousers were. It makes my heart ache to think of those trousers, not believing trousers essential to blessedness, either, knowing the superiority of the old Roman costume of the kilt.

No sooner had Mrs. Falconer cast her eyes upon him than she was convinced of the truth of Robert's averment.

"Here he is, grannie; and gin ye bena saitisfeed——"

"Haud yer tongue, laddie. Ye hae gi'en me nae cause to doobt yer word yet."

Indeed, during the time Robert was gone, his grandmother had had leisure to reflect what an absurd folly she had been guilty of. But it was easy for any one to forget Robert's age, and think of him as a grown man. She had also had time to make up her mind as to what was her duty with regard to Shargar; and the more she thought about it, the more she admired the conduct of her grandson, and the more she saw that it would be right to support him in it. No doubt she was the more inclined to this benevolence that she had as it were received him back from worse than death.

When the two lads entered, from her arm-chair she examined Shargar from head to foot with the eye of a queen on her throne, and a countenance immovable in stern gentleness, till Shargar would gladly have sunk into the shelter of the voluminous kilt from the gaze of those quiet hazel eyes.

At length she spoke:

"Robert, tak' him awa'?"

"Whar 'll I tak' him, grannie?"

"Tak' him up to the garret. Betty 'ill hae a tub o' het water up there 'gen this time, and ye maun see that he washes himsel' frae heid to fut, or he s' no bide an 'oor i' my hoose. Gang awa' an' du't this minute."

She gave various other directions in regard of cleansing, for the carrying out of which Robert was only too glad to lend his aid; and at last Shargar found himself in bed, clean, and, for the first time in his life, between a pair of linen sheets—not altogether to his satisfaction, for the sense of successful adventure was gone.

But greater trials awaited him. In the morning he was visited by Brodie, the tailor, and Elshender, the shoemaker, both of whom he held in awe as his superiors in the social scale; after which he had to lie in bed for three days, till his clothes were ready; for Betty had carefully committed every article of his former clothing to the kitchen fire, not without a sense of pollution to the bottom of her kettle. Nor would he have got them for double the time had not Robert haunted the tailor like an evil conscience till he had finished them. Thus grievous was Shargar's introduction to the comforts of respectability. Nor did he like it much better when he was dressed, and able to go about; for not only did he feel uncomfortable in his new clothes, which, after the very easy fit of the old ones, were to him as a suit of plate-armour, but he was liable to be sent for at any moment by the awful sovereignty in whose dominions he found himself, and which, of course, proceeded to instruct him not only in his own religious duties, but in the religious theories of his ancestors, if, indeed, Shargar's ancestors ever had any. And now the Shorter Catechism seemed likely to be changed into the Longer Catechism; for he had it Sundays as well as Saturdays, besides Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, Baxter's *Saints' Rest*, Erskine's *Gospel Sonnets*, and other books of a like kind. Nor was it any relief to Shargar that the gloom was broken by the incomparable *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Holy War*, for he cared for none of these things. Indeed, so dreary did he find it, that his

love to Robert was never put to such a severe test. But for that, twenty times a day would he have run for it.

At school, though it was better, yet it was bad. For he was ten times as much laughed at for his new clothes, though they were of the plainest, as he had been for his old rags. Still he bore all the pangs of unwelcome advancement without a grumble, for the sake of his friend alone, whose dog he remained as much as ever. But his past life of cold and neglect, and hunger and blows, and homelessness and rags, began to glimmer as in the distance of a vaporous sunset, and the loveless freedom he had then enjoyed gave it a bloom as of summer-roses.

I wonder whether there might not have been in some unknown corner of the old lady's mind this lingering remnant of paganism, that, in reclaiming this outcast from the error of his ways, she was making an offering acceptable to that God whom her mere prayers could not move to look with favour upon her prodigal son Andrew. Nor from her own acknowledged religious belief as a background would it have "stuck so fiery off" either. Indeed, it might have been a partial corrective of some yet more dreadful articles of her creed, which she held, be it remembered, because she could not help it.

CHAPTER X.

PRIVATE INTERVIEWS.

THE winter passed slowly away. Robert and Shargar went to school together, and learned their lessons together at Mrs. Falconer's table. Shargar soon learned to behave with tolerable propriety: was obedient, as far as eye-service went; looked as queer as ever; did what he pleased, which was noways very wicked, the moment he was out of the old lady's sight; was well fed and well cared for; and when he was asked how he was, answered in a general way, "middlin'." For he was not very happy.

There was not a great deal of communication between him and Robert, for though they were much together, neither had much to say. Robert's pondering fits grew rather than relaxed in frequency and intensity, and he knew that Shargar could not have understood what he was thinking about. Amongst chance acquaintances in the town he had the character of a wag, of which he was totally unaware himself. Indeed, although he had more than the ordinary share of humour, I suspect it was not so much his fun as his earnest that got him the character; for he would say such unexpected and strange things in all good faith, that, unable to fancy him serious, the only way they could represent him to their own minds was as a humorist.

"Eh!" he said once to Elshender during a pause common to a thunder-storm and a lesson on the violin, "eh! wadna ye like to be up in that clood wi' a spaud, turnin' over the divots and catchin' the flashes lyin' aneath them like lang reid fiery worms?"

"Ay, man, but gin ye luik up to the clouds that gait, ye'll never be muckle o' a fiddler."

As if ever a fiddler that did not look up to the clouds would be anything but a catgut-scraper! Even Elshender's fiddle was the one angel that held

back the curtain of his gross nature, ever ready to fall between him and the sky. He ought to have been set to his fiddle every Sunday morning, and from it dragged straight to church. It was his only chance for conversion, for then his heart was open. But I fear the prayers would have closed it before the sermon came. He should rather have been compelled to take his fiddle to church with him, and have a gentle scrape at it in the pauses of the service; only there are no such pauses in the service, alas!

And Dooble Sanny, though not too religious to get drunk occasionally, was a great deal too religious to play his fiddle on the Sabbath. He would not willingly anger the powers above; but it was a sore temptation, especially after he got temporary possession of old Mr. Falconer's wonderful instrument.

"Hoots, man!" he would say to Robert, "dinna han'le her as gin she war an egg-box. Tak haud o' her as gin she was a leevin' crater. Ye maun jist straik her canny, an' wile the music oot o' her; for she's like ither women: gin ye be rouch wi' her, ye winna get a word oot o' her. An' dinna han'le her that gait. She canna bide to be contred an' pu'd this gait and that gait.—Come to me, my bonny leddy. Ye'll tell me yer story, winna ye, my dauty (*pet*)?"

Besides his music, it was the sole poetical characteristic in the shoemaker that he always spoke, and apparently thought, of his violin as a woman, just as a sailor does of his craft. There was nothing else about him that could suggest other than a more than ordinarily uncivilized nature. That which was fine in him was constantly checked and held down by the gross; the merely animal overpowered the spiritual; and it was only occasionally that his heavenly companion, the violin, could raise him a few feet above the mire and the clay. She never succeeded in setting his feet on a rock, but, on the contrary, he often dragged her with him into the mire of questionable company and circumstances. Worthy Mr. Falconer would have been horrified to see his umquhile modest companion in such society as she was now introduced into. But the soutar was a good and patient teacher at least; and although it took Robert *rather* more than a fortnight to redeem his pledge to Shargar, yet he did get on. The chief difficulty lay in avoiding the excitement of suspicion in his grandmother from his being out for an hour at a time, two evenings in the week. But the progress could not be rapid when that was all the time given to instruction, with no practising between.

Were those really old faded memories of his grandfather and his merry kindness to him, so different from the solemn benevolence of his grandmother, which seemed to revive in his bosom with the revivification of the violin? It was as if the instrument had laid up a story in its hollow breast, had been dreaming over it all the time it lay hidden away in the closet, and was now telling out its dreams about the old times in the ear of the listening boy. It began to assume to him something of that mystery and life, the feeling of which had such a softening, and for the moment, elevating influence on his master.

The love of the violin grew upon him so, that he began to cast about how he might enjoy more of its company. It would not do, for many reasons, to

go oftener to the shoemaker's, especially now that the days were getting longer. Nor was that what he wanted. He wanted opportunity for practice. He wanted to be alone with the creature, and see if she would not say something more to him than she had ever said yet. Wafts and odours of melodies began to steal upon him ere he was aware in the half lights between sleeping and waking: if he could only entice them to creep out of the violin, and "once bless his humble ears" with the bodily hearing of them! Perhaps he might—who could tell? But how? But where?

There was a deserted factory in the place, the property of Mrs. Falconer, left to her by her husband. Trade had gradually ebbed away from Rothieden till the factory at length was unoccupied, remaining just as it was, with all its machinery rusting and mouldering. It stood at a furlong's distance from Mrs. Falconer's house, on the outskirts of the town in that direction. It had a large neglected garden behind it, with some good fruit-trees, and plenty of the bushes which boys love for the sake of their berries. After grannie's jam-pots were properly filled, the remnant of these, a remnant far greater than the gathering, was at the disposal of Robert, and, philosopher as he already in some measure was, he appreciated the privilege. Haunting this garden in the previous summer, he had for the first time made acquaintance with the interior of the deserted factory. The door to the road was always kept locked, and the key of it lay in one of grannie's drawers; but he had then discovered a back entrance less securely fastened, and with a strange mingling of fear and curiosity had from time to time extended his rambles over what seemed to him the huge desolation of the place. Half of it was well built of stone and lime, but of the other half the upper part was built of wood, which showed signs of considerable decay. One room opened into another through the whole length of the place, revealing a long vista of machines, standing, like the horses of Charlemagne in their caverned stables, waiting till the monarch shall start from the marble table through which his beard has grown, and call them forth to a new race of victory. And by degrees Robert came to think that he had some time or other seen a woman seated at each of those silent powers, whose single hand set the whole frame in motion, with its numberless spindles and spools rapidly revolving—a vague mystery of endless threads in orderly complication, out of which came some desired, to him unknown, result, so that the whole place was full of a bewildering tumult of work, every little reel contributing its share, as the water-drops clashing together make the roar of a tempest. And now all was still as the church on a week-day, still as the school on a Saturday afternoon. Nay, the silence seemed to have settled down like the dust, and grown old and thick, so dead and old that the ghost of the ancient noise had arisen to haunt the place.

Thither would Robert carry his violin, and there would he woo her.

So the next time he went to Elshender, he said, after he had finished his lesson, still holding the fiddle lovingly to his bosom,

"I'm thinkin' I maun tak' her wi' me the nicht, Sanders."

The shoemaker looked blank.

"Ye're no gaein' to desert me baith at ance?"

"Na, weel I wat!" returned Robert. "But I want to try her at hame. I maun get used till her a wheen mair, ye ken."

"I wiss ye had na left her here ava. What I *am* to du wantin' her!"

"What for dinna ye get yer ain back?"

"I haena the siller, man. And, forby, I doobt I wadna be that sair content wi' her noo gin I had her. I used to think her gran'. But I'm clean oot o' conceit o' her. That ane o' yours has tane 't clean oot o' me."

"But ye canna hae 't aye, ye ken, Sanders. It's no mine. It's my grannie's property, ye ken."

"What's the use o' 't to her? She pits nae vailue upo' 't. Eh, man, gin she wad gie her to me, I wad haud her i' the best o' shune a' the lave o' her days."

"That wadna be that muckle, Sanders, for she hasna had a new pair sin' ever I mind."

"But I wad haud Betty in shune as weel."

"Betty pays for her ain, I reckon."

"Weel, I wad haud *you* in shune, and yer bairns, and yer bairns' bairns," said the soutar, with enthusiasm.

"Hoot, toot, man! Lang or that ye'll be fiddlin' i' the new Jerooslem."

"Eh, man!" said Alexander, looking up, as, having cracked the *rosset-ends* off his hands—for he had the upper leather of a shoe in the grasp of the clams—he arrested his right hand on its blind way to the awl, "dov ye think there 'll be fiddles there? I thought they war a' hairps, a thing 'at I never saw, but it canna be up till a fiddle."

"I dinna ken," answered Robert; "but ye suld try an' win there to see."

"Gin I thought there wad be fiddles there, faith I wad hae a try. It wadna be muckle o' a Jeroozlem to me wantin' my fiddle. But gin there be fiddles, I daursay they 'll be gran' anes. I daursay they wad gi' me a new ane—I mean ane as auld as Noah's 'at he played i' the ark whan the deil cam in by to hearken. I wad fain hae a try. Ye ken a' about it wi' that grannie o' yours: hoo's a body to begin?"

"By giein' up the drink, man."

"Ay—ay—ay—I reckon ye're richt. Weel, I'll think aboot it whan ance I'm throu' wi' this job. That 'll be neist ook, or thereabouts, or aiblins twa days efter."

He caught up his awl and began to work vigorously, boring his holes as if the nerves of feeling were continued to the point of the tool, inserting the bristles that served him for needles with a delicacy worthy of soft-skinned fingers, drawing through the rosined threads with a whisk, and untwining them with a crack from the leather that guarded his hands.

"Gude nicht to ye," said Robert, with the fiddle-case under his arm.

The shoemaker looked up, with his hands bound in his threads.

"Ye're no gaein to tak' her awa' frae me the nicht?"

"Ay am I, but I'll fess her back again. I'm nae gaein' to Jericho wi' her."

"Gang to Hecklebirnie wi' her, and that's three miles ayont hell."

"Na; we maun win farther nor that, or we winna get muckle fiddlin', man."

Dooble Sanny caught up a huge boot, the sole of which was filled with broad-headed nails as thick as they could be put in, and, in a rage, threw it at Robert as he darted out of the door. Bang went the violin-case, and out of it came the plaintive noise of a broken string. Through the clang of the boot against the *door-cheek*, the shoemaker heard the cry of the instrument. He flung everything from him and sprang after Robert. But Robert was down the wynd like a long-legged greyhound, and Elshender could only follow like a fierce mastiff. But it was love and grief, and apprehension and remorse, not vengeance, that winged his heels. He soon saw, however, that pursuit was vain.

"Robert! Robert!" he cried, "I canna win up wi' ye. Stop, for God's sake! Is she hurtit?"

Robert stopped at once.

"I doobt ye hae saired her as ye did yer wife, man," answered he, with indignation.

"Dinna be aye flingin' a man's fau'ts in 's face. It jist maks 't at he canna bide himsel' or you eyther. Lat's see the bonny crater."

Robert complied, for he too was anxious. They were now standing in the space in front of Shargar's old abode, and there was no one to be seen. Elshender took the box, opened it carefully, and peeped in with a face of great apprehension.

"Ay its gane?" he said. "I kent the string whan I heard it. But gin that be a', we'll sune get a new thairm till her."

This was spoken in a tone of sorrowful commiseration, as he took the violin from the case, tenderly as if it had been a hurt child.

One touch of the bow, drawing out a *goul* of grief, satisfied him that *she* was uninjured. In jubilant guise he expatiated forthwith upon the three strings, till the doors and windows all round were crowded with heads trying to see through the dark whence the sounds came, and a little child came toddling across from one of the lowliest houses with a ha'penny for the fiddler. Gladly would Robert have restored it with interest, but alas! there was no interest in his bank, for not a ha'penny had he in the world. The incident recalled Sandy to the world and its cares. He put back the violin in its case, and just as Robert was fearing he would take it under his arm and walk away with it, he handed it to him with a humble sigh and a "Praise be thankit," and without another word, turned and went to his lonely stool and home "untreasured" of its mistress." Robert went home too, and stole like a thief to his room.

The next day was Saturday, which, indeed, was the real old Sabbath, or at least the half of it, to the schoolboys of Rothieden; and he had the half-day to himself, for even his grannie was Jew enough, or rather Christian enough, to respect this remnant of the fourth commandment, divine antidote to the rest of the godless money-making and soul-saving week. So as soon as he had had his dinner, he managed to give Shargar the slip, leaving him in desolate dependency, and stole away to the old factory-garden. The key of that he had managed to purloin from the kitchen where it hung; nor was there much danger of its absence being discovered, seeing that in winter no

one thought of it. The smuggling of the violin out of the house was the "dearest danger," for he would not run the risk of carrying her out unprotected, and it was altogether a bulky venture with the case. But by spying and speeding he managed it, and soon found himself safe within the high walls of the garden.

It was early spring. There had been a heavy fall of sleet in the morning, and now the wind blew gustfully about the place. The neglected trees shook showers upon him as he passed under them through the long growth of the grass-walks. The long twigs of the wall-trees, which had never been nailed up, or had been torn down by the snow and the blasts of winter, went trailing away in the moan of the fitful wind, and swung back as it sunk to a sigh. The currant and gooseberry bushes, bare and leafless, and "shivering all for cold," did not even remind him of the feasts of the past summer. He strode careless through it all, and gained the door at the bottom, the hasp of which had no padlock to hold it to the staple, although by means of a bit of string he had managed, when last he left it, to draw it on to its place from without. It yielded to a push, and the long grass streamed in over the threshold as he entered. He mounted by a broad stair in the main part of the building, passed the silent clock in the corner of the wall, which was now expiating in utter motionlessness the many false accusations it had brought against the *hands*, as they are now called, and turned to the left into the first-floor.

I fear that my readers will expect, from the minuteness with which I recount these particulars, that, after all, I am going to describe a rendezvous with a lady, or a ghost at least. I will not plead in excuse that I, too, have been infected with Sandy's mode of regarding *her*, but I plead that in the mind of Robert the proceeding was involved in something of that awe and mystery with which a youth approaches the woman he loves. He had not yet arrived at the period when the sense of the feminine assumes its own paramount influence, combining in itself all that music, colour, form, odour, can suggest, with something infinitely higher and more divine; but he had begun to be haunted with some vague and undefined aspirations towards the beautiful and the infinite, of which his attempts on the violin were as yet the only active outcome. And now that he was to be alone, for the first time, with this wonderful realizer of dreams and awakener of more, to do with her as he pleased, to whisper to her in gentle touches the thoughts that were fluttering in his soul, and listening for her voice, to know whether she understood him by the echoes in which she strove to return them, it was no wonder if he felt an ethereal foretaste, if for him it can be called such, of the expectation that haunts the approach of souls.

I am not even going to describe this his first *tête-à-tête* with his violin. Perhaps he returned from it somewhat disappointed. Probably he found her coy, and unready to acknowledge his demands on her attention. But not the less willingly did he return with her to the solitude of the ruinous factory. On every safe occasion, becoming more and more frequent as the days grew longer, he repaired thither, and every time returned more capable of drawing the coherence of melody from that matrix of sweet sounds. At length, but without his knowledge, the people about began to say that the factory was

haunted; that the ghost of old Mr. Falconer, unable to rest while neglect was ruining the precious results of his industry, visited the place night after night, and solaced his disappointment by renewing on his favourite violin strains not yet forgotten in the grave, and remembered well by those who had been in his service, some of whom yet lived in the neighbourhood of the forsaken building.

One gusty afternoon, like the first, but late in the spring, Robert repaired as usual to this his secret haunt. He had played for some time when, from a sudden pause of impulse, he ceased, and began to look around him. The light was dying away, and came only through two long pale cracks in the rain-clouds that crowded the west. The wind was blowing through the many broken panes in the windows that stood in a long row before him, and away on both hands. A dreary, windy gloom, therefore, pervaded the desolate place; and the machines looked multitudinous in their settled order in the dusk. An *eerie* sense of discomfort came over him as he gazed around, and he lifted his violin again to dispel the strange unpleasant feeling that increased upon him. Just as he drew the first long stroke of the bow across the strings, an awful sound arose in a further room; a sound that made him all but drop the bow, and cling to his violin as to his only protection. It went on. It was the old, all-but-forgotten whirr of bobbins, mingled with the gentle groans of the revolving horizontal wheel, but magnified in the silence of the place, and the echoing imagination of the boy, into something preternaturally awful. Yielding for a brief moment to the growth of goose-skin, and the threatened insurrection of his hair, he recovered himself by a violent effort, and walked to the door that connected the two compartments. Was it more or less fearful that the jenny was not going of itself? that a figure—the figure, as far as he could judge, of an old woman—sat solemnly turning and turning the hand-wheel that set it in motion? But he would not yield to the special pleading of his imagination without calling in the jury of his senses, and therefore went nearer, half expecting to find that the *match*, with its big flapping borders, glimmering white in the gloom across many machines, surrounded the face of a skull. But he was at last satisfied that the figure was a blind woman who lived close by, so old that the neighbours said she had become quite childish.

To explain what follows, I must mention that this woman had heard the reports of the factory's being haunted, and that, groping about with her poor half-withered brain full of them, she had found the garden and the back door open, and had climbed to the first-floor by a farther stair, well known to her when she used to work the very machine at which she now sat. Hearing the violin, she had forgot the ghost, had seated herself instinctively, according to ancient wont, and had begun to turn away at the wheel.

Yielding to an impulse of experiment, Robert now began to play again, from just the opposite side of her wheel. Thereupon her disordered ideas broke out in words. And Robert soon began to feel that it was nearly as terrible to be taken for his grandfather, and so made a ghost of, as to find himself in the presence of one.

"Ay, ay, sir," said the old woman, in a tone of commiseration, "it maun

be sair to bide. I dinna wonner 'at ye canna lie still. But what gars ye gang daunerin' aboot i' this place? It's no yours ony langer. Ye ken whan fowk's deid, they tyne the grip (*lose bold*). Ye suld gang hame to yer wife. She micht say a ward to quaiet yer auld banes."

Then followed a pause. There was a horror about the old woman's voice in the desolate place, sounding as it did, hollow and rattling, that almost took from Robert the power of motion. But his violin sent forth an accidental twang. This set her going again.

"Ye was aye a douce honest gentleman, an' I dinna wonner ye canna bide it. But I wad hae thought glory micht hae hauden ye in. But yer ain son! Eh ay! And a braw lad he was, and a bonnie! It's a sod thing he bude to gang the wrang gait; and it's no wonner, as I say, that ye lea' the worms to come an' luik efter him. I doobt—I doobt it winna be to you he'll gang at the lang last. There winna be room for him aside ye in Awbrahawm's boasom. And syne to behave sae ill to that winsome wife o' his! I dinna wonner 'at ye maun be up! Eh na! But, sir, sin ye are up, I wish ye wad speyk to John Thamson no to tak' aff the day at I was awa' last ook, for 'deed I was verra unweel, and bude to keep my bed."

Robert was beginning to feel uneasy as to how he should get rid of her, when she rose, and saying, "Ay, ay, I ken it 's sax o'clock," went out as she had come in. Robert followed, and saw that she left the garden, but he did not return to the factory that night.

And so his father had behaved ill to his mother too!

"But what for hearken to the havers o' a dottle dauld wife?" he said to himself, pondering as he walked home.

A strange story old Janet told of how she had *seen* the ghost and had a long talk with him, and of what he said, and of how he groaned and played the fiddle between. And finding the report reached his grandmother's ears, Robert thought it prudent, much to his discontent, to intermit his visits to the factory for a time, notwithstanding that she received the rumour with indignant scorn, and peremptorily refused to allow any examination of the premises.

But how have the violin by him and not hear her speak? One evening the longing grew upon him till he could resist it no longer. He shut the door of his garret-room, and, with Shargar by him, took her out and began to play softly, gently—oh so softly, so gently! Shargar was enraptured. Robert went on playing.

Suddenly the door opened, and his grannie stood awfully revealed before them. Betty had heard the violin, and had flown to the parlour in the belief that, unable to get any one to heed him at the factory, the ghost had taken Janet's advice, and come home to his wife. But his wife smiled a smile of contempt, went with Betty to the kitchen—over which Robert's room lay, heard the sounds, put off her creaking shoes, stole upstairs on her soft white lambswool stockings, and caught the pair. The violin was seized, put in its case, and carried off; and Mrs. Falconer rejoiced to think she had broken a gin set by Satan for the unwary feet of her poor Robert. Little she knew how that violin it had kept the soul of her husband alive; and as little

she knew how dangerous it was to shut an open door, with ever so narrow a peep into the eternal, in the face of a son of Adam; or how determinedly and restlessly a nature like Robert's would search for another, to open one possibly which she might consider ten times more dangerous than that which she had closed.

When Alexander heard of the affair, he was at first overwhelmed with the misfortune, but gathering a little heart at last, he set to "working," as he said himself, "like a verra deevil;" and as he was the best shoemaker in the town, and for the time abstained utterly from whisky, and all sorts of drink but well-water, he managed to save the money necessary, and redeem the old fiddle. But whether it was fancy, or habit, or what, even Robert's inexperienced ear could not accommodate itself, save under protest, to the instrument which once his teacher had considered all but perfect; and it needed the master's finest touch to make its tone other than painful to the sense of the neophyte.

No one can estimate too highly the value of such a resource to a man like the shoemaker, or a boy like Robert. Whatever it be that keeps the finer faculties of the mind awake, keeps wonder alive, keeps the interest above mere eating and drinking, and money-making or money-saving, gives gladness, or sorrow, or hope—this, be it violin, pencil, pen, or, highest of all, the love of woman, is just a divine gift of holy influence for the salvation of that being, for the lifting of it out of the mire and up on the roof, and keeps a way open for the entrance of deeper, holier, grander influences, emanating from the same riches of the Godhead. And though many have genius that have no grace, they will only be so much the worse, so much the nearer to the brute, if you take from them that which corresponds to Dooble Sanny's fiddle.



HÁFIZ.

THE observation is a trite and true one, that the national characteristics of a people are nowhere so strikingly illustrated as in their popular poetry. It is here that we must look for the indications of those deeper feelings and sentiments, a thorough appreciation of which can alone insure success in our diplomatic or social intercourse with them. Our daily increasing communications with the East render it more than ever necessary for us to acquire an insight into the workings of the Oriental mind, and for the attainment of that object an acquaintance with the poetry of those nations, if not absolutely indispensable, will be found at least of valuable assistance. At present, it must be confessed, our knowledge of the languages and literature of our Asiatic neighbours is of the most limited description; true, casual visitors to the British Museum may be occasionally observed staring with puzzled and admiring gaze upon some elaborately illuminated *Diván*, but, beyond connecting the name with those bizarre establishments, in which the contem-

plative cockney is wont to inhale the fragrance of his native cheroot, and hence inferring that it is some ingenious Saracenic production, they scarcely dream that its Arachnean surface veils anything like intelligible ideas, and pass on to the equally attractive spectacle of a stuffed gorilla or a sculptured Venus. Some persons, with slightly hazy notions of the East, are content to derive their impressions thereof from the warm and flowing verses of Moore, and imagine that weak dilution of D'Herbelot to be the very counterpart of Persian poetical productions. I am reluctant to dispel so innocent a delusion, but truth compels me to state that the Iráni muse is about as well represented by *Lalla Rookh* as the Alhambra of Granada is by the Leicester Square edifice which bears its name.

I will not weary my readers with a detail of the many blunders and incongruities which present themselves to one acquainted with Oriental manners and languages—how, for instance, an inveterate and thoroughbred Guebre (Gabber is the less euphonious, but more correct pronunciation) has received from his infatuated sponsors the purely Arab name of Hafed; but will simply state that the compliment is eminently fictional, which is embodied in the well-known verse—

I've heard, dear Moore, your lays and song,
Can it be true, you lucky man?
By moonlight in the Persian tongue,
Along the streets of Isfahan.*

Tennyson is perhaps the only English poet whose works remind us at all of the Persian school, to which they are somewhat akin in their highly ornate style, their rich imagery and similes drawn from nature, and the absence of any strong delineation of individual character.

The poetry of Persia was not merely influenced by the Arab invasion, but seems even to owe its origin to the Mohammedan conquerors, and has in turn given its tone to that of Muslim India. Before the appearance of Mohammed, and the spread of Islam, the Persians do not appear to have had any poetry whatever. Bahrám Gúr, one of their hero kings, it is related, once composed a verse by accident, and was thus led to compile some rules for versification; but with this effort he seems to have been content, and did not again essay the culture of the muses.

The story runs as follows: Bahrám Gúr was one day seated in sweet discourse with his lady-love, Dil ÁráM Janghí by name, during a halt on a hunting expedition, when the lovers were suddenly intruded upon by a monstrous lion, attracted perhaps by the fascinating odour of a gazelle then roasting, or possibly contemplating a toothsome banquet off the royal pair themselves. The lusty monarch at once arose, and, seizing the unwelcome visitor by both ears, detained him in his Herculean grip, and exclaimed with pardonable exultation,

* Those who are desirous of seeing Tom Moore in an Eastern dress, may refer to an Arabic verse translation of *Paradise and the Peri*, by the writer of this article, which appeared in the *Birjís Barls* (the Paris Arabic Journal), No. 156, June 21st, 1865.

'Tis I that am now the fierce lion, 'tis I am the tiger untamed ! *

Whereupon the young lady, apparently fearing that some confusion really existed in her lover's mind respecting his own identity and that of his feline foe, observed, by way of reminder,

Yes dear, but they call thee Bahrám, and Bú Haila thy father was named. *

The jingle of the lines pleased Bahrám, who immediately composed a treatise on prosody, which has not, unhappily, come down to us.

The various forms assumed by Persian poetry are all based upon Arabic models. The most important of these are the following :—1. *Masnáví*, or "rhyming couplets," which correspond to our "heroics," being the metre in which all narrative or didactic pieces are written. 2. *Ghazals*, or "odes," of which I shall presently speak more fully. 3. *Cassídahs*, or "idylls," which are generally devoted to panegyric; but the frequently hyperbolical praise of a sovereign or patron found in these poems must not be attributed entirely to servile flattery, or other sordid motives, their object being to display the varied knowledge and command of language possessed by the author, and his capacity for following out a subtle train of ideas, in which respect they may be compared to our own prize poems. Besides those which I have enumerated there are various epigrammatical forms of poetry, such as the *rubá'i* (tetrastich), &c.

The most interesting, because the most characteristic, work in the Persian language is the celebrated *Diván* or collection of *ghazals*, by Mohammed Shams Uddín, of Shiraz, better known by his *nom de plume* of Háfiz.

Ghazals are ostensibly love-songs, but in reality metaphorical religious writings, expounding the peculiar theosophic views of the most extraordinary sect the East has ever produced, the Súfí philosophers. Steering a mid course between the pantheism of India on the one hand, and the deism of the Koran on the other, they exhibit that subtle union of revelation and philosophy which constitutes the esoteric doctrine of Islám. The Súfí poet's aim is to lead mankind to the contemplation of spiritual things through the medium of their most impressionable feelings; the charms of visible objects are enthusiastically described by him; but it is easy to pierce this veil of allegory, and reach the grand ideal of eternal love that lurks behind. His is a religion of beauty, wherein heavenly perfection is considered under the imperfect type of earthly loveliness. Under various beautiful allegories he celebrates the aspirations of the soul after God; now it is the nightingale, intoxicated with ecstasy at the fragrance of the rose; now the moth, annihilated by the intensity of the brilliant object of his contemplation. And all this without a taint of Muslim superstition; for the Súfí takes his stand on a higher ground, and all creeds may bow down with him before the sublime presence of the Infinite. Háfiz is a Súfí of Súfis; Islam claims him for its own; an Englishman has written a treatise to prove him to have been a Christian. The ardent outpourings of the Hebrew sage, are they not a *Diván* too?

* *Manam án babre bayán u manam án shire yala !*
Námi Bahrám turá á pedarat Bú Haiyela.

If you would feel that "song of songs," if you would learn how an Oriental mind, filled at once with the soft influence of poesy, and fired with the inspiration of a divine love, seeks to clothe its thoughts in words, then join awhile the mystic circle of the Súfís, and take a cup of intellectual joy from the hands of Háfiz, their great high-priest.

But what a task do I assign myself in endeavouring to display before you this enchanting string of pearls! Alas! I fear that my unskilful setting will mar the beauty of the gems, and reduce them to the commonest of beads. For how can I translate what is untranslatable? how convey the exquisitely-refined shades of meaning? point out the nice contrasts? or, even in our own plastic language, reproduce a versification which rivals the softness of the Italian, and the stately grandeur of the Greek? Here is one of his ghazals: the roses may wither at my touch, but some fragrance may yet remain to tell of what they were:—

SHAB AZ MUTRIB KI DIL KHOSH BÁD VAIRÁ.

But yestere'en upon mine ear
There fell a pleasing gentle strain,
With melody so soft and clear,
That straightway sprang the glistening tear
To tell my rapturous inward pain.

For such a deep harmonious flood
Came gushing as I swept the string,
It melted all my harsher mood,
Nor could my glance, as rapt I stood,
Fall pitiless on any thing.

To make my growing weakness weak,
The Sáki* crossed my dazzled sight;
Upon whose bright and glowing cheek,
And perfumed tresses dark and sleek,
Was blended strangely day with night.

Fair maid, I murmured, prithee stay,
And pass the ruby-coloured wine;
Such reparation shouldst thou pay,
For thou hast stolen my heart away
With that bright silvery hand of thine.

In Háfiz we are especially charmed with the smooth elegance of the metres. An almost endless variety is presented to us, alternately flowing softly as the gentle stream of a fountain, or babbling along like a running brook—

Come, bring the wine, oh page of mine, for now the roses blow,
Each temperate vow we'll slacken now where fragrant roses blow;
Mid roses gay bid Háfiz stray like Philomela fond,
Make him thy friend whose footsteps tend the spot where roses blow.

And, again, the well-known song, TÁZA BA TÁZA NOW BA NOW, so often sung by the tawny troubadour, even in our own unromantic streets—

O, minstrel wake thy lay divine,
Freshly fresh and newly new!
Bring me the heart-expanding wine,
Freshly fresh and newly new!

* Cup-bearer.

Seated beside a maiden fair,
 I gaze with a loving and raptured view ;
 And I sip her lip and caress her hair,
 Freshly fresh and newly new !
 Who of the fruit of life can share,
 Yet scorn to drink of the grapes' sweet dew ?
 Then drain a cup to thy mistress fair,
 Freshly fresh and newly new !
 She who has stolen my heart away,
 Heightens her beauty's rosy hue ;
 Decketh herself in rich array,
 Freshly fresh and newly new !
 Balmy breath of the western gale,
 Waft to her ear my love-song true ;
 Tell her poor love-lorn Háfiz's tale,
 Freshly fresh and newly new !

These in the original are full of the sweetest melody ; but perhaps the greatest beauty of Háfiz's songs consists in their richness in simile and metaphorical conceits. In some of these last we recognize sentiments that from long familiarity have become as household words to us ; for instance, in the very first ghazal, we read,

The night is dark, the ocean boils, and loud the billows roar,
 What know they of the seaman's toils who ramble on the shore ?

which smacks somewhat of the old song,

"Little do the landmen know
 The toils we seamen undergo."

Nor can we believe that a mere coincidental relationship exists between the vulgar proverb anent the impossibility of capturing an ancient and experienced fowl by means of a transparent paleous imposition, and the following—

Who looks on beauty's treacherous hue,
 Allured by winsome, tempter smiles,
 And deems it true as well as fair,
 His simple faith ere long will rue.
 But ah ! what fowler's net beguiles
 A bird when nought but chaff is there ?

The limits of this article will not allow me to give a selection from this necklace of

"Orient pearls at random strung."

I will, therefore, content myself with rendering the following verses, which are a fair sample of the chaste imagery employed by our bard—

PÍRÁNA SARAM Ú 'ISHKI JAWÁNA BAR SAR UFTAD.

My heart with youthful ardour glows,
 Though all my locks are frosted o'er,
 And white with winter's tell-tale snows ;
 Ah ! now the cruel maiden knows
 What secret love my bosom bore.

Now through the portals of mine eyes
 My prisoned soul hath taken flight,
 Now like a bird set free it flies
 To revel in the loved one's sight;
 Ah me! where it must soon alight,
 Love's fatal net beneath it lies.

Should I have succeeded in raising in one single breast a desire to penetrate the harem-veil which shrouds these brides of Eastern imagination from the outward world, my object will have been attained.

It has too long been the fashion to regard the West as alone possessing all that is most noble and excellent in literature and art, and to such an extent is this complaisant self-satisfaction carried, that we scarcely care to know what our Eastern neighbours have produced. The man of education will only throw a glance of pity and scorn upon the rash innovator who would disturb his favourite Horace from the time-honoured Parnassian throne he has for so many centuries occupied, by venturing to assert that there exists another poet whose lyrics yield nought to his in melody, imagination, and grace, whilst in purity of thought and ornate finish of style, they are incomparably superior. Yet such is the case. Let the incredulous examine for himself. Persian is not a difficult tongue; a few hours profitably spent would soon enable him to master the difficulties that beset a beginner's path; and the glimpse that would be then afforded him of the flowery plains beyond could not fail to stimulate him to pursue his course, until the fairy realm of Eastern poesy should

"Lie all before him where to choose."

E. H. PALMER.

MY LOVE.

I SENT my love some violets;
 She ne'er replied.
 Each day I said, "Ah! she forgets,
 And they have died."

I sent my love a snow-white rose;
 She gave no sign.
 Each day I said, "Alas! she grows
 Much less divine."

I sent my love a jewel rare,
 And then she wrote—
 "Your gift I will not fail to wear."
 I burn'd the note.

Her face soon faded from my mind,
 Though fair to see;
 I said, "She only loves, I find,
 My gold, not me."

MARGARET BROWN.

OVER THE COL DU GÉANT.

BY THE LATE T. HERBERT BARKER, M.D., F.R.S.E.

THE attractions of Alpine travel in Switzerland are partly those common to the scenery of all mountainous districts, and partly such as can be found in no other country of Europe. A general explanation of the impressiveness of views in mountainous regions is easy. We see more there than in level districts. And—granted that the varied reflection of light from green fields, rocks, and other surfaces, is pleasing or impressive—it may be easily shown that of such varied reflection we see far more among the mountains than on the level. Make Skiddaw flat; take it, as you would a painting from an easel, and stretch it along the ground, and a great part of it would be invisible. The foreground would conceal it. If then the mere placing of objects at a suitable angle of elevation can have such effect among hills only two or three thousand feet high, what must it not do among mountains of about five times that height?

But this is only one element in the fascination that leads so many to visit Switzerland again and again, and has already produced a library of Alpine adventures. To explain fully the charm of visits to the High Alps, we must take into consideration the diminished pressure of the air at great heights, the strenuous walking required, the consequent appetite that makes the homeliest pic-nic better than a civic feast, the occasional zest of danger, relieved, when there is rather too much of it, by the carefulness and courage so well combined in Alpine guides, and, above all, perhaps, the rapid transitions of climate and scenery, from the rich peopled valley up to the snow waste marked by all the gradations of vegetation, from luxuriant fruit-trees and lofty pines up, up, past dwarfed shrubs, until we reach short grass sprinkled with “forget-me-nots” that hardly have a stalk, and bloom within a few feet of the glacier.

And passing up beyond the clime of vegetation, it would be a mistake to suppose that monotony awaits us in the higher region, or that everywhere, there, we shall behold only the same vast field of snow and glaciers, and the same peaks marking the horizon. Each notable pass and peak has its own distinct characteristics, and something to show that cannot be so well seen elsewhere. Would you view a solemn panorama of mountains? Ascend the Riffelhorn, in the neighbourhood of Zermatt. There, amid a circle of more than twenty of the loftiest snow-clad peaks of Switzerland, you may find rest and expansion of soul such as words can never breathe. A pilgrimage thither would well repay many of us, if the effect were always such as a French traveller experienced. “There,” says he, “in the presence of a new world disclosed around you, individuality is effaced, and not a vestige of egoism remains.”

In the Pass of St. Théodule one stupendous object, the Matterhorn, towering almost perpendicularly from a sea of glaciers, is like a fixed idea, and overwhelms all other impressions. How vast the transition, when, from the snow and ice all around that mighty rock, we go down into the lovely

Val d'Aosta, enriched with vines, maize-fields, and clumps of walnut and chesnut in luxuriant foliage.

Would you see glaciers intruding, as I may say, to convey a first impression, on the fertile ground of the valley? Go to Grindelwald, and there, standing on green turf, besprinkled with flowers, you may see, through the foliage and blossoms of fruit-trees, the ice-walls and caverns of the glacier. Would you see how even the perpendicular may be scaled? Climb the Gemmi, and forget not to gaze from the summit of the Torrenthorn on one of the grandest of all the assemblages of mountain-peaks that the world can boast of. Higher still—from the celebrated Eagle Pass, from Saas to Zermatt, you may even look down on the Pass of St. Théodule, where lately you seemed to be at the top of everything in Europe, excepting the Matterhorn, and may gaze on a panorama extending to the glaciers of the Tyrol. Or would you see the green landscape and the white in startling contrast? Elsewhere you have looked up from the green valley to the ice and snow, or down from the ice to the verdure. They seemed to be two distinct worlds. Would you seem to stand in both worlds at once? Close by the ice-realm, and yet near the cottages where hearty men and well-favoured Alpine women with their children dwell amid corn-fields, fruit-trees, and flowery meadows, you may stand near the head of the beautiful Fée Valley, and see summer in the midst of winter, and life in the very lap of death.

Distinct from all these varied scenes, the Col du Géant, to which I now beg the reader to accompany me, presents as its special characteristics, the ice-difficulties of the *Séracs*, where glacier-action is seen in its most threatening aspects.

The Glacier du Géant is the most remarkable example of an ice-cataract in the Alps, and, on the whole, is well described in the fine lines of Coleridge:—

“Ye ice-falls! Ye that from the mountain's brow,
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopp'd, at once, amidst their maddest plunge!
Motionless torrents!—silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of heaven
Beneath the keen full moon?”

But glaciers are neither motionless nor always silent. They are gigantic mountain-streams of ice instead of water, proceeding from snow-fields of enormous extent and thousands of feet in height, filling up deep ravines, and ever moving downward into the valleys. The precise rate of the downward movement of some of the glaciers has been measured by a method equally simple and certain. A theodolite is fixed at one precise point of a rock on one side of the glacier, and directed toward another precise point of rock on the opposite side. The line between these two points is then stumped out on the surface of the glacier. After an interval of time the instrument is again fixed so as to mark the same line between the same two points, and the stumps on the glacier are found to have moved forward at the rate of eighteen or nineteen inches per day in summer, and less than half that distance in winter. By the same observations it is also found that the centre

of the glacier has moved on at a faster rate than the sides, and that the curving line of swiftest motion follows the law observed in the flow of rivers.

On each side of the glacier is a *moraine*—forming a well-defined line of *débris*, or wreck of rocks, as it may be more plainly styled—consisting of fragments of rock that have been torn down, or toppled over from neighbouring heights, and carried down by the glacier. If we would have an adequate notion of the vast heights and mountain-masses of the Alps, we must remember that the world of ice, snow, and rock that has been styled a realm of lifelessness is, in fact, full of motion, and that the hardest rocks here have been wearing away through countless ages; yet there they stand still, vast to our vision, and apparently the same for ever. This is an illusion. The glaciers are for ever changing, and the rocks are also subject to changes of a slower progression. No climber will ever again contend with the same difficulties, or cross the same crevasses of the Glacier du Géant that we encountered in the year 1861. With regard to the rocks, we might go back, perhaps, to the time of Cæsar, and hardly find any remarkable variation of their outlines; yet they are constantly, silently going to wreck—

“For ever shattered, and the same for ever!”

It is only when we extend our view over many, many centuries, that we can see the truth of Tennyson’s bold lines:—

“The mountains change their form and flow
From shape to shape—
Like clouds they shape themselves—and go.”

In such short spaces of time as make the lives of men, the changes wrought on the vast rock-masses are unseen. We are compelled to believe that they take place; but cannot see them. The rocks must be “for ever shattered;” for here lie the huge accumulations of moraine or wreck on the side of the glacier; yet the ridges and pinnacles, from which the moraine has descended, still stand out there in bold relief—still the same grand, sky-piercing peaks—apparently the same from generation to generation.

A striking fact has, in recent years, verified preceding observations on glacier-motion. In 1820 a Russian physician, Dr. Hamel, in an attempted ascent of Mont Blanc, proceeded as far as the Grand Plateau, when three of his guides were swept away by an avalanche, and were never more heard of. Some years afterwards, Professor Forbes made some observations on the glacier toward which the lost men were drifted by the avalanche, and from the rate of the glacier’s movement, he was led to predict that within forty-five years from the time of the accident some remains of the unfortunate guides would be reaching the terminus of the glacier, in the immediate neighbourhood of Chamouni. So it has come to pass.¹ In the summer of 1861 human remains were found there, and the colour of hair and other marks sufficed to identify them with those of the guides in Dr. Hamel’s party.

It is glacier-action—on the whole beneficent, though occasionally so terrific and destructive—that unites the apparent death and desolation of the High Alps with all the life, fertility, and movement of the lower world; yea,

with the life and welfare of mankind. A German philosopher, in notes on a tour in Switzerland—written in his youth—observes, that “a sojourn among the desolations of the High Alps might disabuse any theorist of the notion that the whole earth was made for the convenience and welfare of mankind. Man is not cared for here.” It might seem so if we knew of nothing beyond the fields of snow and ice, and did not follow the glacier down to the valley. But let us look farther. Fed by the vast snow-field that lies all around the highest peaks and passes, the glacier descends by its own weight, aided by changes of temperature, into warmer regions, where, ever wasting away, it is still ever supplied with new substance and force from its springs, in the snow-field above. Imprisoned in ravines, where it must wear down the rocks to shape and continue its course, it stretches away down into the green vale, and here presents the spectacle of permanent ice in company with flowery meadows and blossoming orchards; so that, here, life and death, winter and summer, seem to face each other, and to contend for the same plot of ground. As warmth prevails, the waste of the glacier becomes more rapid than its supplies. It thaws, crumbles, falls, and passes away in innumerable trickling streams. But it is only changing its form. The long-imprisoned water, released from its chain, reappears as a noble river, rolling between banks that nourish the vine, and fertilizing the meadows all around the dwellings of men. Thus, in the realm of nature, as in that of providence, the error of a contracted view is corrected simply by looking farther on.

The glacier-action thus briefly described is seen in its highest energy in that part of the Col du Géant Pass to which the name of *Séracs* has been oddly applied. This word properly designates a sort of cheese made by the peasantry of Savoy, and why or how it was thought to be descriptive of a broken and contorted glacier I cannot say. Three ice-cascades meet at the top of the *Séracs*, and descending by a steep and compressed passage are shattered and overthrown so as to fill this part of the pass with most formidable obstacles. The Col Pass is by far the shortest way from Chamouni to Courmayeur, and reduces to thirteen miles a *détour* of two days' walking; yet such are the difficulties, that in fact the longer is the shorter way. There is a tradition that the worst obstructions of the pass have been formed within the last few centuries, and that, in earlier times, direct communication between Chamouni and Courmayeur was frequent. Be that as it may, as lately as the close of the last century the Col du Géant was commonly regarded as no pass—in other words as wholly impracticable. To see the contorted glacier of the *Séracs* was our motive in attempting the walk over the Col, and we had also some curiosity to visit the spot where De Saussure, the scientific hero of the Alps, fixed his cabin and passed sixteen days and nights in making a series of observations which, under the circumstances, remains unparalleled in the history of the physical sciences.

After breakfasting at Montanvert we started for the Col du Géant, with knapsacks well stored with provisions for six—including my fellow-tourist and four guides. Our route for about four hours was over ground not without difficulties for those unused to Alpine climbing. We passed over le Pont—a rock affording scanty foothold on its steep side overhanging the glacier—and

climbed the steeper yet less dangerous Couvercle ; but these short episodes in our adventure were so utterly inadequate to give us any fair conception of the work that awaited us at the Séracs that we shall not further describe them. Their relative position may be fairly stated thus :—at le Pont the tourist says to himself, " This is dangerous ; but may and must be done ;" at the Couvercle he is disposed to say, " This is very hard work ;" but when he first comes in view of the ice-chaos called the Séracs, he says, " This is not to be done !" However, up there, over those vast blocks and fissures of the ice-cascade, "resembling," as Professor Tyndall says, "the foam of ten Niagaras, placed end to end and stiffened into rest," was our way to the Col. Here we partook of refreshment, and then were all well tied together ; for that man depends on man is a lesson soon learned in the Alps.

A glance at a well-drawn diagram would explain the work we had to do better than any long description ; for if ever the power of language fails it is, surely, in the attempt to portray a locality when its features are both extraordinary and complex. Coleridge, in his sublime "Hymn to Mont Blanc," speaking, like a poet, of one momentary impression, calls glaciers "motionless torrents—silent cataracts." But they are not motionless, as I have already explained. Least of all is such a glacier as the Géant motionless. If liquid it would pour itself roaring and foaming with vast billows down its steep incline, and rush with a noise of thunder through the strait that confines its course. But as it is ice, it breaks itself up in its slow fall into a thousand fantastic forms of castellated masses, pinnacles, and billows separated by chasms. If there is anything like a describable order it is among the turret-shaped masses at the summit of the cascade ; but these, from time to time, topple over, fall, and with wide-spread ruin make the base of the fall an ice-world of utter confusion—billows, overhanging sheets of frozen foam, gorges, and caverns, for which we can find no better collective term than chaos. Imagine—to make the picture clear, at least, on a small scale—glass of all shapes and sizes broken and thrown down so as to form a confused pile of fragments on a steep incline, and that a creature of the size of a house-fly has to crawl up the surfaces of the *débris*, keeping, as far as possible, out of the crevices, and finding a way from one fragment to another—and this may give some notion of our work in climbing the Séracs.

Perils and difficulties thickened around us as we proceeded to work our way over the lower part of the glacier. The guides were quiet and thoughtful, and gave strict injunctions that we should not speak loudly. Whether this common rule, observed in places where there is danger from avalanches, is necessary may be questioned. In other words, we may doubt if the pulsations of air caused by vocal sounds can be such as to have any appreciable effect on the ice-masses, however insecurely poised. But all our breath was wanted for the toil upward, and we were by no means disposed, in such a position, to raise any argument on acoustics, least of all when we had a specimen of the power that impels such a glacier as the Géant. We had not ascended far when the last thread of the power of cohesion yielded in one of the blocks of ice piled above us on the left, and it fell with a crash of thunder, breaking up into masses, still vast and heavy enough to crush us—bounding down over

ledges and turrets and shattering themselves and every point upon which they struck. We had witnessed thus what might, perhaps, be called an explosion of glacier power, and the immediate effect was to excite in us a vain wish to hurry out of our perils and difficulties; but this was no place for hurry. Walking as we were over a sort of honey-comb of ice, with deep chasms close by the ledges on which we sought for foothold, slow, cautious progress in the exact line taken by the guides was our only chance of safety.

Further up the crevasses were spanned by snow-bridges, the capacity of which to bear us was often a matter of delicate experiment. I was resting on one of these snow-bridges, while the guide immediately before me was cutting steps in the next ice-wall, when my right leg slipped through the snow. The guides now tugged at the rope with all their might, and soon rescued me from my peril, but not before I had been thrilled by a glance into the chasm so slightly covered. "*Vous êtes trop pesant,*" was the remark of the good-natured guide, and I was not again allowed to rest on a snow-bridge. To go forward seemed only to be making less our chance of extrication, and to return seemed impossible, for we had already climbed ice-walls which we could not venture to descend. Every now and then the guides held a consultation, and sometimes came to the disheartening conclusion that we must turn back some distance in order to reach a point inaccessible on our present route. It was on such occasions, when left standing a few moments on a peak of ice, looking at the precipices and chasms all around me, at the distance through which we had hewn our way, and at the work still to be done, that I felt most tempted to despair. But what will not the force of habit do? The recurrence of apparent danger gradually made us callous to it, and a comparative indifference now gave a mechanical surety to the step in places where such steadiness was the only means of avoiding destruction. When we arrived at a difficulty that seemed insuperable, we calmly surveyed it on all sides, and then went on; and though we had often to retrace our steps among the crevices one after another, the formidable obstacles were slowly vanishing before cool inspection and persevering labour. We rested not, save when compelled by a few moments of hesitation, but went on and up by aid of rope, axe, and ladder, climbing over what we had judged to be insurmountable, and passing over the apparently impassable. The Séracs of the Col du Géant may appear to be a very strange place for the study of such curious questions as arise from the influence of the mind on the physical powers; yet we do not hesitate to affirm that, on some of the relations between soul and body, we learned something there more clearly and forcibly than by reading the best books on such subjects. We especially noticed the depressing effect of every tendency to solitary meditation, and the courage and power afforded by companionship, faith, and emulation. On coming to some seemingly unscalable perpendicular, a first glance suggested the ugly word "impossible;" but as the guide with quiet resolution began hewing steps, his courage became infectious. Where he resolved to go, we also could and would go; and so a rather intricate game of "follow my leader" brought us at last to the end of the difficulties. Some notion of the intricacies of the passage may be gained from the fact that in the course of three hours and upwards of such work on

the ice as I have attempted to describe, we had made less than half a mile of direct progress!

Over the "difficulties" we had passed; but by no means over all the dangers that lie in the way to the Col. There is one very good thing to be said of the Séracs, and that is, they are perfectly honest. They are full of dangers for heedless steppers; and they tell you so. At every turn they bid you be careful. But now we are out of them, and on the *neve*, or snow-field, comparatively level, and smoothly covered with a deep snow. Shall we plunge on here? No!—this is more like life, or what is called the "world," or "gay society;" for here the dangers are—hidden crevasses. There are yawning chasms under that smooth snow. We must still remain tied together, and depend on our guides quite as much as when on the billows of the ice-cataract. Mark how often our leader strikes his alpenstock down into the snow to detect and avoid the crevasses. Apart from this one danger there is nothing now between us and the Col but stiff, persevering walking, with respiration somewhat impeded by the rarity of the air at an elevation of nearly twelve thousand feet. One weary furlong follows another. We begin to feel the process monotonous; but after our triumph over the "confusion of confusion" in the Séracs, ought we not to be thankful, and even joyous? A few more weary furlongs—we stand at the top of the Col, and are rewarded by one of the noblest panoramas in this marvellous region!

Under an unclouded sky of deep Italian blue, in range over range, an Alpine world of snowy peaks, precipices, and glaciers is disclosed. Close beside us was Mont Blanc, still towering four thousand six hundred feet above us, and with buttresses of dark, bare rock on the south—altogether different from the northern snowy aspect, from which he derives his name. Here, as seen from the Col, he rises precipitously from the valley, and seems especially deserving of his title of "monarch." On the south we have the finest almost-perpendicular view of the Alpine world, excepting—as I suppose we must—that one fearful look down from the summit of the Wetterhorn to the green pastures of Grindelwald, so well described by Mr. Wills. Here we gaze from the snow-field of the Col, eight thousand feet down to green slopes and the hamlets about Courmayeur, and so steep is the declivity that we see nothing of the ridges and precipices by which we must descend into the valley. It seems, exactly as other Alpine climbers have observed here, as if you might cast a stone down upon the church at Courmayeur.

At this first look down I had some misgivings respecting the practicability of a safe descent, especially as I remembered that it was on this declivity of the Courmayeur side that three English travellers, with one of their guides, went down in an avalanche of the snow to which they trusted themselves. "Keep to the rocks!" is the one safe rule in descending on this side, though you may be tempted by fatigue to take a shorter and more rapid passage by way of a glissade on the snow. If it slide away, remember, there is no rest for you till you reach the green slopes so far below. On the rocks, though fearfully steep, there was no real danger while we were tied together; but so great was the necessity of caution, that the descent passed over in these few lines occupied, in fact, five hours.

SMALL TALK, AND VERY SMALL TALK.

AN assertion that the two kinds of colloquial intercourse above specified lie at the opposite extremities of the conversational scale would perhaps hardly be correct, since the statement would imply that they are respectively the best and the worst forms of employment in which the brain and the tongue can conjointly be engaged; we shall not, however, be far wrong in stating that their relative values may be expressed by the familiar comparison of cheese and chalk. But, notwithstanding the real difference which exists between them, they are, by the force of circumstances, so frequently brought into close proximity, that the transition from one to the other is a process simple and popular, and therefore being constantly performed; yet there can be no doubt that whilst Small Talkers may be regarded as benefactors to our species, Very Small Talkers are spectacles fit to make angels weep.

It is necessary, at the outset, to describe what we mean by Small Talk. Small Talk we understand to be the small change of sensible conversation. It is the minor coin of the circulating medium of human intelligence. As silver and copper exercise most important, and, in fact, indispensable functions in our household transactions, so does Small Talk in the discussions on the social, political, and intellectual topics of the day. Intrinsically, the baser metals and the lighter conversation are alike less valuable than their more weighty relatives, but in the long run they are more useful, and are more easily applied in carrying on the small business and relaxation of our matter-of-fact everyday life. A man with a pocket full of sovereigns only, hesitates, even when hungry, to offer one of them for a halfpenny loaf; to his neighbour with a purse of shillings, it matters little whether the loaf cost a penny or a pound. So, in society, we see the deeply-read man of profound intellect dumbfounded in his intercourse with mankind for want of this small conversation; he is unable to impart of his abundance a portion small or diluted enough to suit the capacity of his would-be hearers; and the latter feel themselves unequal to deal with the proffered gift in the only form in which he can offer it. How many are the opportunities of usefulness which these men lose; think they do, write they may, but benefit the mass of ordinary society by their conversation they cannot. How necessary, even for the most learned and highest gifted, is then the possession of this power of Small Talking. But it is not on their account that its cultivation is chiefly important. What matter if they are silent; to the mass of society, their conversation, in any form, would seldom be acceptable. People do not meet round the fireside, or congregate at the dinner-table, or stay in each other's houses, to work their brains, or to discuss science. It is for amusement and recreation that they are there. But it is nevertheless just to these very persons, the more in proportion as this legitimate recreation is over-used and abused, that the exertions of Small Talkers are of the greatest benefit.

The arena where the Small Talker exercises his vocation with the least personal labour is at the dinner-table, with strangers near him. The use of the old allusions to the weather he knows well, and he does not scorn to

employ them as a means of breaking the ice. He must, in fact, begin on some topic common to himself and his companions, and what have we all more in common than this? The topic naturally suggests others, but in passing from it to them, some dexterity is required. It may be that he is not sufficiently unconscious of his own powers, or that, from a feeling of vanity, he shows a glimpse of the leading rein. If he be weak enough to do so he may retire at once, for we all instinctively rebel against attempts which we see are being made to drag us into conversation. In this game of battledore the wary man will sometimes, perhaps frequently and ostentatiously, drop the shuttlecock, and thus give a practical piece of flattery to the play of his partner. And when at length he has the game completely under his control, he will quietly take the lead, and whilst suiting the pace and continuance of the conversation according to the taste of his partner, he will direct it into channels with the navigation of which he is thoroughly acquainted. There are few people proof against the seductions of this kind of conversation, few so utterly dull and stupid as not to remember with pleasure an evening when, unwittingly, they were taken in hand by some man or woman whose intellectual superiority they would scorn to admit, but in whose company they acknowledge to have spent, somehow or other, a most agreeable hour. How, commencing on some seemingly indifferent topic, they were induced to hear and talk about social, political, national, or intellectual questions, not discussed scientifically, but in a practical manner in ordinary language, so that they could not help taking in them a certain amount of interest. The subjects treated of may on paper sound mean and insignificant; the theatre, the poultry-yard, the garden, athletic sports, the last boat-race, or botanical fête may have been under discussion; but at all events, they were pleasantly dilated upon, and probably fresh ideas will have been elicited. Lest we should appear unpractical, and only chamber counsellors, unused to the ways of the world, and indulging in Utopian dreams, we hesitate to bestow more than a passing allusion on the higher branches of this science. Their utility best appears when brains of some capacity coming *en rapport*, the value of the conversation rises higher and higher; when a stray remark shows the existence of deeper thought and knowledge, and when a sudden and momentary sparkle reveals the hidden gem within. We would deal with the general rule, not with the exceptions.

But, as has been already indicated, it is not when with strangers that the difference between him who can, and him who cannot talk Small Talk is most apparent. When acquaintances ripen into friendships and intimacies, when familiarity increases, as it is sure to do amongst persons staying in the same house, then it is that the difficulties of keeping up Small Talk, or rather of preventing it degenerating into Very Small Talk, are fully felt. The man who can prevent this catastrophe is simply invaluable.

And to realize fully the extent of the descent from the one species of conversation to the other, the philosophical inquirer should pass an evening or a few days with a proficient in the art of Small Talk, and then, trusting to his good angel, domesticate himself for a time in some family circle, or in a society of persons tolerably intimate with each other, and possessing an average

amount of intelligence. For a short time previous to his making the experiment, he should have revelled in an atmosphere removed alike from the rarefying air breathed by the votaries of science, and from the miasmas of the marshes and the low levels of ordinary life. And then, whilst fresh from this bracing region, let him take the plunge which we have suggested. Where is he? What air is he breathing? A stranger to the country, he finds here no landmarks to guide him. He is in a dreary waste of bald meteorological statements, a morass of neighbours' affairs, a labyrinth of censorious and ungenerous comments on the doings of other people; pitfalls of scandal—doubtless, however, not intended for any real damage—surround him. Let us drop metaphor. Go into any society; not necessarily into that of the suburban "Row" of semi-detached villas, or that of the small county town, or the colonial garrison, but into the homes and among the families of English gentlemen. It is painful to listen to the general conversation; a name of a mutual friend is mentioned, and something which he or she, his or her belongings have said or done, is commented upon with a freedom which, to be in any way justifiable, presupposes a thorough knowledge of all sides of the case; and the minor worries of life, servants, babies, and the like are sure to have their full share of the conversation. Of course conversation about our own past, present, and future is strictly legitimate; in fact it is almost too true that it is to be wished that egotism were a more prevailing vice in such intercourse. If there be conversation which should be the exception and not the rule, it is the farrago which, in too many homes, is dished up for daily consumption. If any one thinks we exaggerate, and that Small Talk such as we have been describing is quite unnecessary, let him endeavour to abstain for four-and-twenty hours only from discussing other people's affairs, and he will find in the difficulty he encounters a proof of the truth of what we have alleged. And this pernicious habit, if indulged in, obtains the mastery. The mind becomes enervated, the mental vision is contracted, the reflective faculties are paralyzed by disuse. At first too lazy to look up, the victim's back is soon stiffened so that ere long he cannot. When in health, he refused to gaze on God's world and to seek for lessons from it by the light of the glorious sun; he preferred by the aid of his miserable artificial light to gaze fixedly into the minutæ of the little plot of ground immediately around him; and now, even if he can raise his head, he is dazzled by the extent and splendour of the prospect offered to his gaze, and without a sigh or a struggle shrinks back to his own narrow sphere of observation.

Such we believe to be a true picture of a state of things, the existence of which cannot but be a source of regret to all thoughtful persons. Let us endeavour to ascertain whence this evil originates.

A vast majority of the readers of this paper, especially if they be of the weaker sex, will, in answer to our complaints, reply, "We cannot talk learnedly all the day long. To be constantly, or only employed in this Small Talk which you have been describing would be a great bore. You who are fond of reading and writing may do it, but we cannot." With your last three words, gentle reader, we are compelled, much against our wills, almost to acquiesce; but that it is your misfortune, not your fault, we will endeavour to

show. It would be nearly fruitless to attempt to point out what a very unnecessary amount of talking is indulged in by all of us: we will, therefore, at once proceed to state what we believe to be the root of the evil.

It is but a repetition of the old cry, faulty education, or rather, careless bringing up. It is in the first dozen years of life that the mind receives much of its future bias. Children, though unobserved, are our audiences very early in their lives. Parents fail to notice, as time creeps silently on, how wide little ears are opening, and little understandings enlarging, so that conversations, unintelligible in baby years, are listened to with attention and pondered over by small men and women, who we fancy to be too much engaged in the troubles, worries, and anxieties of doll life to mind what we are saying. It is only when some stray remark respecting a grown-up person's sayings or doings falls from a child's lips, that our attention is called to the fact. But as our children advance in intelligence, we shall find that even if we have established over ourselves the necessary amount of self-control when in their presence, our task is only half done. The weeds are not permitted to grow in the garden, but the soil refuses to remain unproductive, and something must be planted in the vacant spot: and it is in seeking to execute this portion of the work that parents, however zealous and anxious they may be, will find the greatest difficulty. A man may be full of information, yet be disinclined or quite incompetent to impart it to young minds. For the sake of illustration, let us picture to ourselves the breakfast-table of such a one, surrounded by the rising generation. *Paterfamilias* is enjoying himself thoroughly. Absorbed in the newspaper, he likes the murmur of the young voices, so long as it does not interfere with his reading. There is some well-written interesting leader, or some soul-stirring chronicle to be mastered in a very short space of time. Oblivious of almost everything beyond the margin of his paper, not a thought of the intense selfishness of the proceeding crosses his mind. The newspaper with the second cup of tea is so well-established a tradition and usage, that it would be rank heresy to deny its value. Nevertheless we go further, we declare it, as at present made use of, to be positively injurious to society; for this meal is one of the few occasions on which the members of a family meet under supervision, and it ought therefore to be made the most of. But *Paterfamilias* takes so much interest in the world's doings that he really must learn as much about them as he possibly can, and that he should deny himself this legitimate pleasure, and spend his time in juvenilizing the subjects about which he is reading, would be a very great hardship; therefore general conversation about any topic of the day must not be thought of. But if he will be silent, his children are talking, and if he abdicates his functions and refuses to lead his followers, they will disperse their own ways. The bolder spirits, who should be the most carefully watched, will trespass on forbidden or dangerous ground; the timid must be content with the already closely-cropped herbage of home pastures. We have selected the morning meal as an illustration of our argument because, as we have already indicated, it is essentially *the* family gathering in English homes.

We do not wish to magnify molehills into mountains, but we believe that in the same manner as small plants apparently insignificant may and do become

the foundation of large sand-banks, so it is from this and similar neglects of duty that much of the mischief we seek to combat first arises. In the case of the sons, it is met and counteracted when they leave home and mix with their fellows; but as regards the daughters, they, unless they be naturally of a broad mental disposition, never cease to feel the effect of this want of judicious training. As girls they were left to regard their little worlds as the only worlds in which they ought to feel an interest, and when, as married women, they are transplanted elsewhere, habit compels them to form other little worlds for themselves there also. In the present day women are the chief instigators to the crime of Very Small Talk, and if what we have said be true, can this be a matter of surprise? A woman in any society can if she choose determine the style of conversation, and if we would seek for a higher standard of intercourse it must be through the influence of that sex. We are quite convinced that this can to a certain extent be effected; and therefore it is incumbent on each of us in his own circle, even at the risk of being thought rather dull and stupid, to cut off his own supply of Very Small Talk, and to replace it by some portion, small though it be, of the superior article. However successful we may individually be, the Very Small Talkers will retain much of their popularity, and will have a larger following. It cannot well be otherwise. Chatter the world will, and as the supply of the genuine article can never equal the demand, adulteration will be the order of the day. Let each of us, at all events, endeavour to escape the responsibility of having been concerned in the degradation of the glorious gift of speech. When Talleyrand said that language was given us to conceal our thoughts, did he mean that we were to make use of it as a veil only over our clever ideas, and not also over our foolish ones?

L. A. HALE.

THE "MARY JANE'S" FORECASTLE.

A SEAMAN'S EXPERIENCES.

THE British barque "Mary Jane" was a six hundred ton ship, registered A 1 at Lloyd's, and well insured. Too well insured indeed for my comfort, for it was Scrapper & Cheapjohn who were insured and not the ship. She was not a bad ship, though, by any means, but being sound in the bottom, with good gear as far as it went, Lloyd's called her "A 1." Not that the gear went far enough, though it went pretty often where it wasn't wanted to; and there wasn't over much spare stores to replace it with. But then Scrapper & Cheapjohn were well insured, and it didn't matter very much to them what became of the "Mary Jane." Leastways, our fellows in the fo'castle said so; and that as Scrapper & Cheapjohn never even saw the sailors they employed, and took no care of their interests, they didn't see that there was much encouragement to slave for the property of such owners. However, the "Mary Jane" wasn't a bad ship of her class; quite as good as most vessels I ever sailed in; and I wouldn't specially remember her, but that she nearly made me food for sharks on our voyage home from the West Indies. We sailed from Trinidad in very good trim

a id very good humour, with a very good captain, not a bad set of hands, fine weather, and high expectations. When our fellows struck up a song in the evening, "Homeward Bound," "Rolling Home," or anything that had home in it, were the popular favourites. We had all of us been absent from England many months, though some few had only shipped for the voyage home, and that's the reason we had full hearts, when the song reminded us of those we loved at home.

All went well for some weeks, but by and by the wind came foul, the weather got bad, the old sails and old ropes began to give out, the spare gear ran short, and all hands were kept pretty busy patching up sails and splicing ropes; the captain got crusty, as captains do when the wind doesn't suit them; the mates were always fault-finding, and the men as constantly grumbling. A sort of cloud comes over people at such times, and things don't seem so bright and cheery to them as when the sun shines, the wind fair, and a speedy voyage generally expected. Our dead foul wind grew into a stiff breeze; the fore-topmast and jib-boom went over the side and had to be cut away; and as we hadn't spare spars or a hawser in the ship to rig others, we made slow work of it afterwards. Having made all snug, there wasn't much to be done while the breeze lasted, but to smoke our pipes and make the best of it.

Some way or other, after a week or so of such weather, the pipe loses its soothing effects; and no wonder, for as we had come straight out of the tropics, and those that were trained seamen chaps hadn't got warm clothing, they suffered bitterly from the continual wetting and the cold, though these wouldn't have been much thought of if we had been going outwards from home instead. So this made people feel gloomy-minded, sickly, and not up to their work. The captain said we were malingering and shamming, but we were not a bit. I tried to keep up my pluck, though I felt drowsy and stupid, as one always does after some weeks at sea. It isn't the confinement that does it, for we have plenty of hard work to keep the devil out of our minds. Even on Sundays work is the only means to keep that prince of evil out of the ship. Some officers are very clever at inventing (so-called) *necessary* Sunday work: scraping masts and stoning the decks when all else fails; but very few devote any part of it to public worship, though they know very well that we never can have any privacy for other worship. So it isn't want of exercise that makes seamen feel ill after a few weeks on the voyage; for there is no life more healthy and inspiriting than a sea life in itself. But I lay it all down to the feeding and the place we live in. It isn't felt at first, because sailors are used to roughing it; but after a few weeks' bad provisions and bad housing begin to tell. Strength and spirits begin to forsake us, and a job of work isn't done with a cheery good will. Everything one does becomes an effort, an exertion, which one's courage has to be screwed up to make. When a reef has to be taken in, or a sail furled, there is no *running* up the rigging—so lazy are our movements; and when once in the bunks, nobody cares to turn out. The officers scold and abuse, accusing us of shirking work and skulking; and though their words have all the sting of apparent truth, it is too great an effort to get angry

enough to arouse oneself to show even out of spite that one is not a skulker—a name most abhorrent to seamen.

These feelings come from living for long in such dens as our fo'castles. They aint fit for a dog to live in, much less a man that works so hard as a sailor. Now, the "Mary Jane's" fo'castle was as good a one as I ever served in, except in those new clipper-ships that have Yankee deck-houses amidships, which are something like Christian places to live in. It wasn't one of those bathing machines, called topgallant fo'castles, which are in the bows of the ship upon the upper-deck, with two large hawse holes for the cables and salt water to run through, giving you all the benefits of a shower-bath without getting out of bed. The "Mary Jane's" fo'castle was a triangular little space below deck in the eyes of the ship, without any bulls-eyes or ventilators, which got all its air from the hold, required a cat's eyes to pierce the darkness, and could not be scrubbed out, lest it should never dry again. There were eighteen men and boys to use it, though there wasn't clear deck-room for them all to stand in it; yet there were no tables, stools, or other furniture in the way, except the sleeping-bunks in tiers and our clothes-boxes. When all came down into it at the same time, some crouched into the bunks, others sat on the boxes, and the rest squatted on the ground with tarpaulin coats under them; for it was as damp and as dark as the grave. When the booby-hatch was drawn over in a breeze or rain, the smell might have been figuratively cut with a knife; and between the steam from our wet beds, wet clothes, and wet deck, and the drippings through the ceiling as the caulking worked out, it was a wonder we didn't all get rheumatism; but they say that salt water doesn't hurt, and we are pretty well used to that sort of thing. I often wished myself a piece of the dry-goods we carried, as the caulking wouldn't have been allowed to work out, and I should have had a dry place to rest in during my watch below. When I made a voyage in a transport, I envied the horses their dry quarters, for when some water did work through, the officer kicked up such a row, that tarpaulins were spread under the deck until the carpenter had mended the caulking. Of course convicts have the best and driest of quarters on shipboard; but that they have everywhere.

The salt-water cure is bad enough, but the fo'castle smells kill me outright. The "Mary Jane's" fo'castle bulkhead wasn't air-tight; neither, for that matter, is any other ship's I know of. We could see through into the hold, and the only way of escape for the foul air from the cargo to the upper deck, was through the fo'castle. Our cargo smell wouldn't have been bad in the open air, but when confined in a close little den, with human bodies and cooked food and dirty clothes that are seldom washed, a general West Indian cargo doesn't give out a wholesome atmosphere. Molasses and brown sugar give out an offensive smell like sewerage, which turns white paint lead colour in a night, and gilt buttons quite black. Ships that carry soldiers are forbidden to carry this cargo, so you may imagine what it was in our little airless fo'castle; why, our very skins were blackened, and it was useless to wash ourselves. Our bilges, too, stank awfully, and when we were all closed up in a breeze and the bilge-water rolled about, it was like living in allotment

cabbage-gardens surrounded with little piggeries. The worst smell, though, came from the drinking-water, which was stowed in wooden casks instead of iron tanks, and placed right against the open seams of our fo'castle bulk-head. After we had been five or six weeks at sea, the water smelt quite putrid.

We smoked our pipes as we lay in our bunks to keep away the smells, but they got the better of us when we fell asleep, and then we awoke with a dreadful oppression on the chest, a dryness in the breath, and a restlessness all over. That sort of atmosphere cannot be healthy for long, and that's the reason I think it was that little squeezed-up black hole which made us so lazy and cross, and so discontented and ill-humoured. The only things which kept us lively were the centipedes, and other insects, which came out from the cargo. They're not very pleasant messmates, but they're better than the snakes and scorpions which come out of some cargoes. Indeed, our cargo was far better than many others we might have had, such as guano, which must be a terrible thing to live with for four or five months. But if the bulkheads abaft for the officers and the passengers are perfectly air-tight, I don't see why ours shouldn't be made tight too.

As the voyage progressed, the crew got more sickly, complaining of pains in the joints, languor, and weakness, with very bad breath, and a disinclination for food. At last I got knocked down myself, and felt that it wasn't all shamming when fellows turned up their noses at good old beef and pork; for our provisions were as good as any I ever sailed with, except that being old they were somewhat hard and boiled away to less than half allowance. We had our beef and dough one day, and pork and pea-soup the next, with tea or a glass of rum morning and evening. Some stuff called lime-juice we had too, kept in a cask with a tap to it; if there ever was any piece of the lemon in it, the virtue was all gone long ago, but our fellows said it was only citric acid run bitter, and wouldn't taste it. But when the sick grew worse our jaws became so weak, and our gums so swollen and sore, that the beef was too hard and tough to be eaten at all, and our stomachs wouldn't retain the pork. The dough, too, being only salt beef fat, and flour, mixed with stinking water, was not eatable. The captain gave us then a bag of rice, and as long as that lasted we did comparatively well. He offered us medicine, but the kind of medicine we really wanted was a few yams, potatoes, preserved fruits or vegetables, of which he had none. As soon as the rice was done we were obliged to pound up the hard flinty biscuit into dust and mix it with the tea, and that was our only food till we got to land. About half the crew were thus laid up, quite prostrated. The others, naturally strong and healthy men of steady habits, managed to hold their heads up, though they could hardly keep up heart, for low spirited as they were, they had to do our work as well as their own. There aren't any hands to spare in a merchant ship, and when one half are right down to it, and the rest half sickly, it is hard to manage the vessel even in fine weather, and if she gets into difficulties, it must go hard with our lives and the marine insurances. Those that suffered most had been sickly before they joined the ship. I had had a touch of the fever, though quite well and strong when I came on board,

but wasn't up to such unchanging diet for long. Some had had scurvy in a previous voyage from the East Indies with Coolies; others had been living riotously when in port, and were in a bad state of body to battle with hard tack, no vegetables, and make-believe lime-juice.

The old sailmaker frightened us by telling his experiences of the scurvy. When he was in the Pacific trade most of the crew had scurvy more or less and in different ways, and he and four others were hoisted into the "Dreadnought" hospital-ship once like so much rotten carrion, so disfigured that their own mothers wouldn't have known them. The doctor told him that short commons, bad meat, or hard living helped to bring it on, but that want of vegetable food was the great cause of it. Good lime-juice, which costs only a shilling a month for each man, and is ordered by act of parliament, invariably keeps it away, even if there be no potatoes or other vegetables served out. But tartaric acid, citric acid, sulphuric acid, and other useless cheap stuffs, are sold for it, and sailors suffer. The sailmaker said that officers and passengers never suffer from it, no, not even convicts, because the law took care that emigrants, soldiers, and convicts should have preserved vegetables on shipboard, and real lime-juice, and not be crammed into black holes. He had never been the same man since he had the scurvy; it took twenty years from his life; and made him liable to take any passing disease. The doctor told him to take a string of onions and a bottle of salts of potash to sea with him, and not to trust to the cheap trash given instead of lime-juice; and that vinegar didn't prevent the scurvy though beer did. Many of the large ships belonging to good owners never have the scurvy when they berth their crews well, serve out potatoes and compressed vegetables, and preserved meat now and then, and give full prices for good lime-juice mixed with a little spirits, and sealed up in glass bottles. There was no scurvy in Yankee ships; for though they knocked their men about like dogs, they fed them like Christians, always giving potatoes or preserved vegetables, cheap fruits, molasses and treacle; and when they added some beer it didn't so much matter if the lime-juice deteriorated.

The captain was very kind as soon as he saw that we were really ill, notwithstanding his severity at first when he thought we were only shirking. He gave us, as I said, the bag of rice out of the cabin, and some raisins, pickles, and sour wine, which did far more good than the whole medicine-chest could do. But what could he do, poor man, when his little private stock was exhausted, but let us die easily? So the sick were brought on deck every fine day to breathe the pure air of heaven, look out on the cheery sea, and look forward on the horizon towards England and home.

A shark had been following us for some days, but the crew had carefully avoided letting the sick know about it, as it was regarded as a sure sign that death was nigh, and the shark, forewarned of it, was waiting for his prey. One day, when the sick were brought on deck, the shark-hook was seen towing astern, and one of us asked all about it. Then some of the sick made sure that they were going to Davy Jones's Locker without more ado, and they thought it hard not to see old England again. Many were the messages sent by some to wives and friends at home, in anticipation of a watery grave. I wasn't

so superstitious myself, but being naturally inclined to look on the bright side of things, and believing

"There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
Keeping watch for the life of poor Jack,"

I still hoped to cheat the sharks this time; though I vowed never to go to sea again, until sailors were fed and housed as well as the law treats emigrants, soldiers, and convicts, at sea. But it wasn't so with others. Poor John Newman couldn't get over the idea that the shark was looking out for him, and he took it so much to heart that he died whilst they were carrying him down the fo'castle ladder. His gums had been so swollen and spongy for many days that his teeth were quite covered up and his face so distorted that his best friends wouldn't have known him. A death-like yellow pallor had been over him and others for days, and the purple spots we had on our legs had broken out in Newman into sores, and he couldn't move himself. His breath was so bad, that between him and the other sick, our little fo'castle was like a charnel house. His blood was starved and his flesh rotting alive, so that as they lifted him down the ladder he went off into a swoon and never recovered. The sailmaker sowed him up in canvas and fastened a weight to his feet, and so he was buried in the middle of the Atlantic. There were many angry words in the fo'castle after his funeral. It was said that Scrapper & Cheapjohn had poisoned Newman, just as much as those who poison their friends by inches and are hanged for it. They said that Newman never would have taken ill at all, if Scrapper & Cheapjohn had acted honestly up to the Act of Parliament, and paid two shillings for his two months' allowance of lime-juice, instead of sixpence for trash; or spent a pound on vegetables of any kind. It was true, Newman had had scurvy treatment in a former ship and had been rather free with drink when in port, and that's why Scrapper & Cheapjohn's slow poisoning diet killed him outright quicker than it ought to have done. Our fellows said that if sailors were not so friendless such poisoners would be tried for their lives; but seamen rot and die voyage after voyage, and nobody cares what becomes of them. We are called a degraded, debauched set of men, drunken, diseased, and reckless. Well, suppose we are. Who makes us so? The sea? No. But those who profit by our vices.

Happily for the rest of the sick we sighted the Azores next morning, and a fine, large, homeward-bound East Indiaman at the same time. She had a distilling apparatus on board, and gave us a supply of the best of water, a few potatoes and compressed vegetables, and a bottle of good lime-juice. They couldn't lend us any hands, but advised our captain to run into Flores and heave to, and the natives would bring off vegetables and fresh meat to restore our men. As the "Mary Jane" was now distressed for men to work her, so many being sick, and the stormy neighbourhood of the Channel would soon be reached, the captain resolved to put into Flores, though Scrapper & Cheapjohn had given him express orders not to do so. We hadn't hands enough to keep the ship standing off and on, so the anchor was let go, and the port dues had accordingly to be paid. Fresh meat and vegetables are, however, much cheaper than salt meat, so that Scrapper & Cheapjohn saved

money by the transaction, and, the delay being only a few hours, very few miles were lost in our voyage.

Thanks to the Indiaman's distilled water and lime-juice, and to the watercresses, vegetables, oranges, lemons, and the few fowls we had laid in, all the sick were convalescent before we reached the Chops of the Channel. The shark which followed us had said good-bye when the anchor was dropped at Flores, and we soon forgot all our former forebodings. As we sighted Dungeness on a bright autumn day, the recollections of our painful sufferings, our ill-humour and discontent vanished under the happy influence of invigorated health, the cheering hope of soon landing in old England, and the constant ship duties which kept us out of the sickening smells of the fo'castle. Thus it was, that by the help of a few potatoes and oranges, I escaped the sharks that time—not the first time by a long way that I risked giving them a dinner, having performed former voyages under similar conditions; but they didn't last so long, not having such a run of foul winds as we had in the "Mary Jane."

Arrived in the river, our captain wrote to the *Times*, thanking the captain of the Indiaman for his kind gift and advice, which had saved the lives of many men, and preserved a valuable ship and cargo from the great risk of entering the Channel so short-handed from sickness. Scrapper & Cheapjohn did not even thank the East India captain for his services to their ship, their insurance covering them from all anxiety as to the safety of the "Mary Jane" and her luckless crew. Truly has it been said "The love of money is the root of all evil." So long as this Christian country treats her seamen so, and makes little or no provision for their spiritual instruction, let good Christian landmen not be astonished at our recklessness and depravity; for as you sow, so we reap.



A TOUR UNDER AN UMBRELLA.

IT is only from the sea that the coast of Devon can be thoroughly well seen. Rocks and promontories are discovered then to stand out with a boldness of relief that can only be dimly imagined when they are viewed from land. And for this cause alone—not to mention the many opportunities of observing character, which will be afforded him—I should advise the excursionist into Devonshire to follow my own example, and journey thither by means of one of the steamboats which leave Bristol and the seaports near the mouth of the Avon, and which will take him as far down the Bristol Channel as he may wish to go. And the scenery on certain parts of this same coast is singularly beautiful. On the day the present writer commenced his trip into the far west of England, it was to be beheld to striking advantage. Off Somersetshire there is nothing very remarkable. Inland rise some fine heather-coloured hills, called the Quantocks, which, when seen from the water at some miles' distance, present the appearance of an indistinct mass of violet and deep purple; but the rocks themselves seldom have any pretensions to majesty, and are of no uniformly great height, till the boundary line of

Devonshire is almost reached. It is then that a change comes over the prospect. The waters of the Channel cease to be stained with the muddy discharges of the various rivers which empty themselves into it, and are a deep clear blue. An increase of freshness and buoyancy in the breeze is felt, and the steamer begins a most undoubted "roll." The grandeur of the coast scenery becomes far greater; the outline of the rocks grows bolder, as they commence to frown gloomily upon the sea beneath. A grand sight, indeed, are the North Devon Cliffs, extending as they do in an almost unbroken line to the Land's End, and displaying a wonderful variety of beauties; now of a dark-red colour, and now almost black, surmounted on all sides by a singularly luxuriant vegetation. Here they are split into far-retreating chasms and glens, in the depth of which are clusters of trees and patches of heather; here their surface is clad with grass and ferns, which extend sometimes from their topmost crags almost to the water's edge, dotted over by sheep, perched at intervals upon rocks and the brinks of precipices, which might be supposed to deny access even to the lightest and surest-footed of quadrupeds. The effect of all this, as I gazed at it from the steamer, was heightened by the huge floating masses of clouds which, as they sailed across the sky, cast their shadow on the rocks and sea beneath—one fantastic form giving place to another in rapid succession, all the more beautiful from its contrast with the reflected sunlight, with which it seemed ever to struggle for the mastery. Now and then, when the cliffs sunk in height, and the sudden rise of some inland hill afforded a barrier to the winds, I could espy different country seats in the basin which nature had thus formed—Glenthorne, Combe Martin, and various others. And so we steamed on, past Lynmouth and Lynton—called by enthusiastic hotel proprietors and lodging-house keepers, "the Switzerland of the west," which I shall have occasion again to mention—past a succession of bold promontories, known by the name of the Forelands, till, after a five hours' sail, we came in sight of our destination, Ilfracombe. The appearance of the harbour as we entered it was remarkably imposing. It consists of a deep recess in the rocks, flanked on each side by two hills, that on the east, Helesborough, about four hundred and fifty feet in height, and on the west, Lantern Hill, about three hundred feet high. Above the harbour and around it spreads the town itself, and beyond to the right and to the left is a background of dark mist-enveloped hills. Nature, indeed, seems to have intended Ilfracombe to be the great port of Northern Devon. Within the compass of the rocky ramparts which gird it in on every side, few storms, however boisterous, can make their violence felt, and whenever the gales are high—and on the Bristol Channel this is very often the case—the harbour is closely packed with trading vessels of every size.

But there was something else to be done than to feast my eyes on the fair prospects before me. I was to stay one or two days at Ilfracombe; and as I noted the crowd of visitors which had assembled on the pier to greet the advent of the steamboat, it struck me for the first time that I might experience some difficulty in getting a bed. Nor, as the result proved, was my anxiety unfounded, and I was finally compelled to accept an offer made

by a waiter of one of the hotels, in a somewhat patronising tone, of a room out of the house. Ilfracombe was full—horribly full. It was quite the reverse of the retired, unsophisticated little watering-place which I had pictured it as being. There were even most of the unpleasant accessories of a London-super-Mare—dandies in elaborate costumes parading the “town” at all hours, matchmaking mammas and fascinating daughters, bands of music, and—yes, they had positively penetrated into this remote corner—acrobats and performing ponies. That evening and the following morning I devoted to exploring the beauties of the Ilfracombe coast, and very great these are. It would be difficult to fancy anything more fairy-like and fantastic than the cliffs and piles of rocks that may be seen along the shore. Now one finds oneself hemmed in by huge masses of stone on every side, amid which it is no easy matter to preserve one’s footing, and now one emerges through a winding passage of rocks on the brink of some large sea-pool or bay, quite shut out from the rest of the world, and offering a delicious temptation for a bath.

Ilfracombe was as beautiful, as I looked down from the top of the Barnstaple coach, while it winded its way up a very steep hill, as it had seemed when I first cast my eyes upon it from the steamer’s deck. It only wanted, I thought, a judicious weeding of visitors to be a spot that one might linger in for weeks together. The whole of my drive to Barnstaple—a distance of eight miles—unfolded at every turn a fresh cluster of beauties. The road is a very winding one, and the scenery wonderfully varied,—presenting alternately to the eye, hill, vale, wood, and water. At one time we overlooked a deep, dark glen overgrown with trees, through the green foliage of which we could hear the trickling sound of water, and sometimes catch a sight of its gleaming spray; at another, we suddenly made a descent of more than a hundred feet, and found ourselves in one of those lanes peculiar to Devonshire, with lofty hills rising on either side, covered with the wildest and richest verdure.

“Rather damp in this part of the country,” I remarked to the coachman, as the first slight drops which portend a heavy shower fell, and all the horizon suddenly seemed to grow dark.

“Yes, sir,” was the answer; “there’s a goodish drop of wet in these parts; last night the moon changed, and I expect we shall have plenty of it soon.”

And plenty of it we certainly had, for by the time I reached Barnstaple I was drenched to the skin. Fortunately I had one change of clothes with me, and by the next morning everything was dried. But the rain was there still, and seemed to have every intention of remaining. However, I was not to be deterred, and resolutely buckling on my knapsack, vigorously protecting myself with my umbrella, I went to the station to catch the train to Bideford *en route* for Clovelly. Barnstaple is a nice, clean, old-fashioned country town. Its streets are very narrow, and its river is very broad; beyond these I am not aware that it possesses any very noticeable features. I had entertained hopes that the heavy shower which was descending when I entered the train would have ceased by the time I was deposited on the Bideford platform. But nothing of the kind, it was raining—not with a spasmodic violence that must

soon exhaust itself, but in a steady and certain way, that clearly indicated that if I waited for a dry walk to Clovelly, I might wait the remainder of the day, and possibly the whole night too. Clovelly, I was assured, was only eleven miles distant; if this account was true, which I strongly suspect it was not, I can only say that the miles were the very longest it has ever been my luck to walk. Of course I performed the whole of my journey under shelter of my faithful defence against an inclement sky. The rain fell tolerably straight, and that alone was something to be thankful for. Occasionally I caught a peep of the sea, but view there was none; everything was involved in a dense mist. I was left pretty much to my own meditations for companions in my walk. When I passed a cottage I could generally perceive at the window a gathering of the inmates assembled to gaze upon the melancholy spectacle of a tourist and his umbrella; and I met a few rustic wayfarers, accompanied by pigs and sheep, who stared at me in a manner which seemed to ask what I could be doing out on such a day as this. At last I came to a sudden turn in the road, which, I was informed by a guide-post, would lead me to Clovelly; and forthwith I commenced a gradual descent through a lane overarched by trees, the heavy drippings of which made my umbrella more necessary than ever. This brought me to a kind of platform that looked immediately over a deep valley, filled with trees, sloping down to the sea some hundred feet below. Nothing else could I catch a glimpse of from that point but the foliage beneath me, and the waters of the sea further beneath me still. Where was Clovelly? I knew that I could not have missed my way, and yet I seemed to have come to the end of all things—some *ultima Thule* of tourists. There was a little path to the right, but that apparently would only take me deeper into the wood; however, it was the only one visible, and I could but try it. I had not advanced thirty feet before the gravel pathway suddenly changed to a little pebble pavement, and a few paces more brought me in sight of a cluster of houses and a tiny village, through which went the little pebble pavement, forming, with its steps at irregular intervals, a kind of quaint staircase. I was in full view of the sea; and far away to my right and left I could discover the bold cloud-capped profile of the cliffs; while high above and around all, waved the trees which I had thought a few minutes ago occupied the whole of the valley. It seemed as if some giant had sown, as it were, the little collection of small white houses amid the wood; or as if he were supporting them amongst the trees upon the palm of his outstretched hand.

I was not sorry to be sitting in the parlour of the "New Inn," with a substantial meal before me, and my limbs encased in dry, comfortable clothes. The rain still descended, and of course going out again that day was out of the question. I had hardly opened my eyes next morning when I flew to my bedroom window to see what the weather was like,—and found it as wet as it had been the night before.

It is very much the reverse of pleasant to be bound up within the walls of a little village inn, with no other resources than one's thoughts, one's Murray, and one's pipe, when one has set out with the intention of being always in the open air, and allowing one's lungs a continual feast on invigorating sea breezes. Rain or no rain, I determined I would not be

daunted from making an expedition to Hartland Point, which I had always heard mentioned as one of the finest and most commanding headlands in the west of England. True, the accounts which were given me of the walk there were not such as to encourage me to start while the weather was in its present condition; but the ardour of the English pedestrian is quite ungovernable, and though "Harty," as it was affectionately styled by the nautical population of Clovelly, was alternately described to me as being four, six, and eight miles distant, I determined to make my way there as I best could. The first two miles of my walk lay through the grounds of Clovelly Court—the ancient dwelling of the Carys of "Westward Ho!" celebrity—which, notwithstanding the extremely unfavourable circumstances under which I saw them, were surpassingly fine. In some parts they are as carefully cultivated as a flower-garden, and in others nature is allowed to run quite wild, revelling in huge masses of purple heather and golden furze. Hill and dale, woodland and stream, they are each there; while the sea can be viewed from every point of the park that runs to the very edge of the cliffs: and how magnificent these cliffs in parts are! A bridle-path wound along their brink, from which I could see foreland after foreland, boldly standing out into the waves that lashed their rocky sides. The rain had not ceased, and the fog was still upon the sea; but I almost think that for these reasons the whole scene was the grander.

A rough, dirty, rugged road it was to "Harty" Point; the water was above my ankles during the greater part of the last mile or two. The end, however, crowned all. Hartland Point should be seen by every one who comes within a reasonable distance of it. It is the extreme north-west promontory of Devon, and commands on one side almost the whole of the Bristol Channel, while on the other one can see far away into the waters of the veritable Atlantic. The shape of this foreland is somewhat remarkable, being not unlike the hull of some huge ship, keel uppermost. Hartland Point itself is separated from the mainland by a narrow neck of rock, which descends in a steep precipice on either side of three hundred feet. The wind was very boisterous, and I prudently forebore endeavouring to get across this rocky ridge to the extreme end of the point. I had a capital view as it was; for suddenly the mist over the sea cleared away, the sun shone brilliantly out, showing me Lundy Island directly opposite me, the dark granite cliffs of the Cornish coast far away to the left, headland after headland running out into the sea; while to the east, with the help of my binocular, I could discern the full extent of Bideford Bay, and the whole reach of the Bristol Channel properly so called. But what struck me more than anything else was the variety of strata to be seen in the rocks round Hartland,—black, white, red, and purple.

A walk to Hartland Abbey and to Hartland Town, and thence once more back at Clovelly. Clovelly seems to be itself aware of the fact that it is a "romantic spot;" it has been told so so often that it has grown quite conceited on the strength of it. The fishermen, who constitute the majority of the inhabitants, even the toddling little imps who wander up and down the staircase street, all seem to know that they belong to an undeniably "romantic home." You ask the guide who accompanies you through the Court grounds

whether a certain neighbouring spot is pretty or not. "Yes, sir," is the answer which you receive, "but it is not nearly so romantic as Clovelly." But, seriously, Clovelly is like no other place in England; it has but one drawback—it is growing terribly hackneyed. Were it not that its situation defies the most persevering of builders, we should have a monster hotel erected at once, which would quite overwhelm that charming little hostelry, the "New Inn," where the traveller may linger for days, and be ten times as comfortable as at more pretentious places of entertainment.

I had one fine day at Clovelly, which I availed myself of by walking through the drive known as the "Hobby,"—so called because its original projector displayed a passionate fondness for it. And well he might. I shall not easily forget the succession of magnificent views which met my eye at every bend of the road. Below me were wooded glens, and beyond the sea, glistening in the morning sun, I could see Clovelly pier, which the Carys built; I could see quite plainly Lundy Island, Gallantry Cliff—nearly five hundred feet high—and, beyond all, Hartland Point. The blue waters were studded with ships, and everything about me seemed to revel as much as I did myself in the return of sunshine and warmth.

Back again to Barnstaple, and from Barnstaple to Lynton by coach, a distance of some twenty miles. Lynton is the exact opposite of Clovelly; it is convex instead of concave, on a hill instead of being in a valley or glen—and both places are gems of their kind. An hour of fine weather and sunshine was allowed me; during the remainder of my time I had, as usual, to contemplate Lynton, and its sister village at the foot of the hill, Lynmouth, from underneath the protection of my umbrella; but I had become accustomed to such small necessities as these. I was not deterred from walking up the beautiful valley of the Lynn to Watersmeet, the confluence of two branches of the stream, nor from a ramble round the Cliff Walk and the coast. There was much to remind me in all that I saw of a Swiss village: so that, perhaps, the language applied to the native hotel and lodging-house keepers—which has been quoted above—does not so much transgress the bounds of truth. It was wonderfully fine as I stood up on the cliffs to watch the huge masses of mist roll up the valley from the sea, or descend from the heights of Exmoor. In no part of Devonshire have its poorer classes such a strongly marked individuality as in the immediate neighbourhood of Lynton. They retain more of their own way of thinking and acting, their old beliefs and superstitions, than is the case elsewhere in the county. Up to this day they have implicit faith in the power of spells and magical draughts to drive away and prevent disease. It is no uncommon thing for these poor people to give as much as five or six shillings to the "wise man" or woman of the neighbourhood for a small bottle of magic medicine, which is to be a safeguard against all maladies in general, or any illness in particular, and which, when it has been submitted to chemical analysis, proves to be nothing more than an innocuous mixture of alum and water.

A twelve miles' walk, great part of it along the cliffs, brought me to the Porlock Weir, which is in Somersetshire—the favourite head-quarters of the sportsmen who chase the red-deer of Exmoor with the Devon and Somerset

stag-hounds. Close to Porlock rises the highest hill in the west of England, Dunkerly Beacon. If the weather is fine and clear, I believe a wonderful view of the surrounding country, the Channel, and the Welsh coast beyond, is to be obtained from this spot; but I need hardly say that the weather was not fine on the day on which I ascended the beacon—some seventeen hundred feet in height, and that, consequently, my view was of the most limited description. I may mention here, perhaps, that although I have gone up Helvellyn, Snowdon, and Ben Nevis, and various other mountains in Great Britain, I have never been yet favoured with a satisfactory view, so I am not sure whether it would not be better if I were to give up for the future all thoughts of aspiring to the reputation of a mountaineer. Dunkerly Beacon is really the commencement of the Exmoor range, which stretches from Somerset into Devon, and which is the habitation of the famous ponies, and the equally famous wild deer. I have, on a previous occasion, ridden through the whole of this wide moor; I have done even more than that, I have lost my way in the dreariest of Exmoor fogs, an adventure which, while to me it was attended with little more than amusement, may very possibly prove not only a source of inconvenience but of danger. I have seen, too, herds of the Exmoor stags, and splendid animals they are; and I have before now followed the hounds after them, on a memorable day, on which our quarry led us a chase of nearly forty miles, and finally taking to the water at Lynmouth, was captured from a boat.

Not far from Porlock is the seat of the Earl of Lovelace—a beautiful Italian villa in the midst of not less beautiful grounds. By-the-by, his lordship married Lord Byron's daughter, who died a year or two ago. Close to this is Culbone Church, one of the quaintest little ecclesiastical buildings that I have ever seen, and, I believe, almost the smallest in England—its length being only thirty feet, and its breadth twelve. While I am on the theme of churches, I may mention one near Barnstaple, which has rather a curious history. Braunton is its name; and the story goes that some good saint, whose name I forget, had a vision in which an angel appeared to him and desired him to found a church on the spot on which he should first behold a sow attended by a litter of young ones. As proof of this story, the sexton of Braunton points to a certain piece of oak carving in the chancel, which represents the aforesaid sow and her juvenile family. Can this be a Devonshire rendering of the old myth of Æneas and the foundation of *Albas Longa*?

A coach drive of eight miles brought me to Minehead, an unsuccessful Somersetshire seaport, which had tried hard to achieve a commercial reputation, and failed. My peeps at Devon were over; perhaps I had not enjoyed them the less because they had principally been taken from beneath the seasonable protection of my umbrella. There is a wide field for the study of the human mind under certain, and not, perhaps, its most inviting, aspects in Devonshire; and the tourist may possibly feel inclined to vary his rambles amongst those beauties of scenery, some glimpses of which have here been given, with observations and inquiries of a not less profitable if somewhat saddening kind.

T. H. S. ESCOTT.

WINTER SONNETS.

I.

LOW in the south thou smilest in thy flight
 One brief bright flush, as of an angel's face;
 Then sweepst on to gleam on larger space,
 Leaving the stars to represent thy might,
 And the new moon thy ever new delight.
 Yet thy swift glance illumines our homely place
 With one sweet trance of all the summer's grace,
 When skies were blue and fields were daisied white;
 The golden legend on each wrinkled leaf
 Takes a new glory from thy hasty beams:
 And desolate hearts, half-wither'd with their grief,
 Feel once again the ecstasies of youth
 Thrill in the depths of unforgotten dreams,
 The tenderest love of love, the truth of truth!

II.

The river flows with hasty flood and keen,
 Biting the red earth from the broken ledge:
 The dull-eyed sparrow dozes on the hedge,
 Dreaming the world is clothed in fruitful green,
 And only wakes to hunger and the spleen.
 Lean blackbirds dig for grubs with golden wedge;
 The water-hen stares wildly from the sedge,
 Half-crazed that not a minnow can she glean
 Within her wonted pool. I, too, am cross'd,
 And wander like an unforgiven ghost,
 In the dank meadow by the whirling stream,
 Seeking redemption. Lo, the holy sign!
 A half-blown Daisy lends her patient gleam,
 And all the world is clothed in light divine!

III.

Lo! as the pale year staggers to his doom,
 How sweetly glad the stars in heaven are shining!
 As if to them there could be no repining,
 Whoever died and dropp'd into the gloom.
 It may be they are wise, as old, and see
 The moanless stream of beauteous mystery
 Flowing, though darkly, to eternal bloom,
 And unassailable felicity.
 Why should they weep above a human tomb,
 Which only holds the soul's insentient lining?
 Knowing that Life is still the Lord of Death,
 The Stars for ever chime that all is well:
 Men change from mortal to immortal breath;
 And funeral moan is muffled marriage bell.

W. FREELAND.

ON RELATIONS WITH RELATIONS.

IT is not a little curious to observe, as one goes up and down in the world, the vast quantity of unhappiness caused in homes by the behaviour of relations to each other.

Husband and wife are not related. They meet from different parts of the earth, country, county, or parish, and, united, form one flesh. To treat of their various modes of annoying each other would require a volume, not an article; and, besides, their relationship is totally distinct from any other kind. The relations of father and son to each other may first claim attention. It is a significant fact, contradicted on rare occasions, that a father is apt to regard his heir very much in the light of a rival. Why this should be the case may be explained in a variety of ways.

Let us begin with the birth of the heir. To the mother the first child brings a halo of new joys and hopes, that are most pardonable, in their exultation and maternal pride. A woman, perhaps, for the first time realizes her true position in the world when, like Eve, "she has gotten a man from the Lord." As the mother of this "man," she has an important rôle of duty laid out before her. The various little fancies and prettinesses of the bride, hitherto expended on the lover husband, must now be thrown aside as frivolous—or, at all events, as "Baby's" due, not "Papa's," "Papsy's," "Daddy's," "Pappy's," as this husband is now designated, in lieu of the numerous fond names coined for him alone. Even should the husband and wife be free from the conventional modes of making love, and behave to each other with common sense, as well as affection—still the husband misses the love that flowed forth for him alone, and this he may resent, all the more that it is impossible to complain of a mother loving her baby. He could not be such a monster. Thus his heir is his rival already. By the time the second child arrives, "Papsy" has become so accustomed to playing second fiddle, that he welcomes the new stranger from the feeling it will probably give his "rival" a serious knock-down; and to help this he takes the new baby under his particular patronage. This causes a general shaking of heads in the nursery.

"Beant it odd now, Mrs. Basket?" says the nurse of the house to the nurse of the month, "as gentlemen can't abide them as is to stand in their shoes?"

"It be, Mrs. Pother; but one comfort is, the male sex is mostly given to foller natur' in their ways. There's never a bird in the hedge as don't do the same."

"True, indeed."

True or not, as the eldest son grows, and—thanks to servants, even perhaps the loving mother—knows that he is to stand in his father's shoes, it is not against nature to imagine that the father may look askance at his heir now and then, if he assumes a little. The son, again, though a dutiful, good son, is not to be judged harshly if the thought crosses his mind, "Some day I will alter this. When I am master, I will have so and so." And the tender mother, unknown to herself, fosters the feeling of rivalry, because

her boy, her particular boy, her first-born, must be a little petted and humoured. Is he not the heir? is he not, sweetest thought of all, her first "man from the Lord," the origin of those tender gushing feelings that awoke up in her the perception of her strength and importance in the world—that made her feel grateful to God for dignifying her with the title of mother? If the father and son grow old together, there may be impatience on one side, as to the best part of life being lost waiting for his inheritance; while a mere inquiring after his health arouses a bitter feeling in the heart of the father—"He wonders I don't die."

But this is an extreme point. Enough has been said to show why it is that second sons presume with their father in every possible way; can do no wrong in his sight, may gamble; give him worlds of trouble to get him out of scrapes; and yet the eldest son "must not look over the wall."

Happy is that sight, where the father, duly conscious of the many cares and duties attached to the life of his heir, makes him his friend and companion, familiarizes him with the order he has considered it necessary to keep. A father who can warmly say, "Mind, Jack, you take care of the woods your father planted. Be careful, my boy, of political interest; don't let us have a radical on our estate; and, above all things, be a father to your brothers and sisters—and don't let us lose our good name in regard to being kind and liberal to our poor relations." A father who consults his heir as the person most interested in what he is doing, who has a pride in him, and hears with delight and no rivalry, that he is likely to be what he never was, a man renowned.

Happy heir, and still more happy father! He dies knowing that he shall still live in all good men's memory, because he has reared for them a worthy successor, whose mourning for him is as heartfelt as if he had carried his old name, his ancient title, his vast riches, all his honours and pleasures, away with him to his grave. Mothers, unless they have been beauties, have not to undergo the same ordeal as fathers. With regard to sons, a mother is seldom harsh, unjust, or wanting in love to them. The dignity of the male sex is unconsciously allowed by her in this. The curse Eve brought on her daughters demands this submission of will to the man who only ate to oblige her.

But in her relations with her daughters, a mother is very often extremely faulty. Let us begin with her when they are still young. Mothers are hardly aware of the immense power they hold in their hands with regard to the future of their daughters. Girls from their cradle are as ready with their quick wits as women are when required to act as women. And very precious and invaluable are those "quick wits," in sickness, in danger, and in trouble. But a precocious, shrewish little maiden is a disagreeable and dangerous thing to deal with. If mamma is inclined to gossip, miss will grow up a story-teller. If given to fret, miss will have a temper. It is out of all possibility for miss to forget her early training. Who does not know what Miss Browne became, when she constantly heard Lady Browne tell her papa, Sir Thomas, "that really she could not help dying of laughter to see how the child mimicked her grandmother, the dowager Lady Browne, laying down the law! It was your mother to the life, Sir Thomas."

"My darling," whispered Mrs. Smith, "your mother hopes to be a grandmother some day. You would not like her to be laughed at, especially by your child."

Miss Smith's little rosy face was deluged with tears at the supposition. Her little girl, when she had one, doubtless doated on her grandmother.

Lady Upton was a stern, severe disciplinarian, especially with regard to etiquette. Her daughters were the shyest, most awkward of girls, and were only saved by a natural goodness of heart from being hypocrites as well.

Mrs. Robinson considered nature alone should educate her girls. Nature did her best; but without restraint, pruning, and a certain keeping of order, we all know Nature, however lovely, is practically useless. The Miss Robinsons, helpless, untidy, untaught, remained on their mother's hands until they mutually forgot their relations to each other; and it was hard to say which upbraided the other most.

But even where the mother has done her duty, and the daughters are conscious of it, there is often a want of good temper in their relations with each other that makes the mother long for any suitor to rid herself of an ungrateful child; while the child is equally ready to marry, without love, perhaps without respect, to get from a home of which she has had enough. She does not want to be ordered about it, and considered still a child, when she conceives herself as wise, if not wiser, than her mother. It is a melancholy household to live in, where the father and mother have done the best they can by their children, but still the children do not leave the parent nest. By degrees it grows too small for them, while the parents are still contented with it. This makes things uncomfortable between them. The want of peace and quiet is sadly felt by the old couple, while the lack of sympathy with their youthful whims and conceits angers the young ones.

"As they have got no one to marry us, they ought at least to make our home happy to us. It is very little we want, only a horse for me, and a little pony carriage for Ella to drive. Something we ought to have to amuse us."

And the selfishness of the young is a very strong, fast-growing plant. When once it takes root, it soon stifles anything like affection or dutiful respect. Parents would do well to remember too that the memory of children is most tenacious. It is a sad thing when, the restraint of youth removed, the parent advancing to second childhood, and the child hardened into a morose or fretful middle-age, they should recall the mistakes of their bringing up, and twit their parents as the cause of their loveless, useless life.

"You would not know there was a child in the house," boasted an arbitrary father to a friend. The friend pitied him, and would have pitied the children. But he perceived that on every occasion of the father leaving home, the mother, pale and gentle-eyed, having struggled in vain to give the children their proper place in the house, made up for it by allowing them every licence when he was absent. On one occasion, on a signal being given that the father had ridden away, the children trooped down in noisy glee to their mother. Each began the play they liked best, and the drawing-room was as littered with toys, and as jocund with laughter and happiness, as any nursery, when the dreaded voice of "papa" was heard in the hall. He had

forgotten a letter, and returned for it. Without looking to their startled and paling mother for help, the instincts of the children prompted them to hide away in the quickest manner they could. Some wrapped themselves in the folds of the window curtains, others ran under the table; a fat chubby fellow rolled himself into his mother's dress.

His glee had been so great, the disappointment was too much for him; and though the father was somewhat astonished at the disorder of the room, he was too hurried to stay to inquire, and the children might have remained undiscovered had not a sob burst from the disappointed little heart. His father extracted him from his mother's dress by one leg, and placing him before him, commanded him sternly "to speak the truth, and answer directly, what are you blubbering for, you booby?" The fat little fellow, thinking his last hour had come, obeyed both commands, and with a roar of crying, exclaimed, "Because you have come home, papa." Poor father, you are to be pitied! The sweetest, purest, freshest love of all loves, you throw from you. But in the present day children run more risks from over indulgence than from severity, and parents are not unfrequently made to feel in their old age that the persons who least respect them in all the world are their own children.

With regard to the relations between brothers and sisters, they are generally much better than brother to brother, and sister to sister. During youth there is a certain shame, as well as a kind of halo in the minds of the young, that makes their little quarrels and disagreements of an evanescent kind. Their nurseries may have been the arena of much that was cross and spiteful, but they were all to blame, and all think it best to forget. But when circumstances so occur that the children of one nursery have to spend their old age together, the ancient follies and tempers crop up, and become sins. Then is the home most unhappy. They can be kind, courteous, forbearing to the merest acquaintance; they can put themselves out of the way for one who is almost a stranger; they can weary and work for a friend; while they have not the commonest patience with those who form part of their own household.

When relations have arrived at this stage of distaste for each other, the case is very bad. They are like the invalid, who loathes his sick regimen, and longs for anything else than what he has. They long for any companion rather than the one they have. They are irritated by a cough, angry at an observation; they are painfully conscious of some little habit; and who has not a habit? If "too much familiarity breeds contempt," too near a relationship begets all manner of evil tempers; and people are such slaves to them, they will not take the smallest trouble to cure themselves of their irritation. They rather hug it, because it is a relation they hate, and they are justified in hating this relation; he or she has such queer ways. Of course if it was a friend, it would not be right to be severe on them. But a relation ought to know that they are disagreeable, having a trick of always saying "don't you know," always putting in their opinion when not required, always seeming to do just what you don't want, at the very worst moment. Of course what is the use of their being relations if you cannot make them understand they are, as relations—odious.

Again, there are relations extremely fond of each other. People warm-hearted, affectionate, whose devotion to their own kith and kin is a beautiful and refreshing thing to witness.

And yet at times how miserable they make each other, simply because, their tempers roused by some act, they do not consider it necessary to be as forbearing towards their relation, however beloved, as they would towards a comparative stranger. The laws of courtesy and forbearance, so strong towards an indifferent person, seem not to be considered necessary in dealing with a relation. It is hardly possible to conceive the lengths to which recrimination will go between two people warmly attached to each other, simply because they consider it does not matter what they say to each other. They must make it ^{up} in the end, somehow, and they love each other still very dearly; so all will come right at last.

But it does matter, and very seriously too. When people, fond of each at bottom, do break down the barriers of love and fealty to each other, they scarcely know themselves what bitter things they say or insinuate; and these leave a sting behind, even in the fondest heart; so that when the next quarrel takes place, the fuel is all laid ready for the fire, the smouldering ashes only require a little fanning.

"If I could only restrain my tongue, Sybil, I should be so thankful. I hope you will forgive me, dear."

"I do forgive you heartily, Jenny; but you know it was the same thing last time; all I could say, you would not believe me."

"I am so hasty, darling, I wish you would not answer me."

Of the various phases of touchiness one might fill a volume. And it is generally the person who claims the privilege of having the warmest heart that is the most tenacious.

The torment^{ing} kind, good, amiable people inflict by being touchy, they would be the last to see themselves, because they pride themselves on an affection which is exacting. They think it necessary to prove their love by wearing out the patience and forbearance of the object. They accept all loving attentions in a deprecatory manner. They stifle love with doubts and stipulations.

When relations begin to feel out of humour with their relations, the disease, if encouraged, becomes monstrous and unrootable. Cases have been known where near relations have lived together for years and years without exchanging a word. And when death came and separated them, a flood of remorse embittered the last years of the one left, until they were ready to pray to God to send death for them also, to relieve them of their intolerable anguish. Even good, pious, truthful people are sometimes victims to this bitterness of feeling against their relations. They perhaps suffer from the supercilious pride of haughty relations, who, very inferior to them in goodness and worth, yet accident having made them rich and prosperous, they feel they have a right to snub their poor relations.

No one likes snubbing. But snubbing from a relation is simply purgatory. A youthful matron likes to snub her unmarried sister; an elder brother will tyrannize over, and browbeat a younger one; Sir Thomas Browne

snubs all his poor relations; Lady Browne looks over their heads; Miss Browne ignores to her friends that she has any cousins in that sphere. Poor relations, as a body, are certainly a thorn in the sides of the prosperous.

They always appear at inconvenient times. They have miraculous children, who only require a little patronage to set the world ablaze with new lights. They cannot be thrust aside like servants, and will not see how often they are not only out of place, but not fitted for the fine company of their fine relations. On the contrary, they take advantage of this little peep into the upper world to make the most of it, unconscious that their dress, their manners, their ideas, all belong to the narrow sphere of a very limited circle. And if the poor relations should, in addition to a little vulgarity, have a somewhat impudent, bold heart, then, indeed, Sir Thomas is in the right to snub, and Lady Browne to order her porter "Never to admit that person again."

After all, why are we less tolerant with those with whom we live, on whom so much of our happiness depends, than with casual acquaintances? Why does a man distrust his own household, to place confidence in a stranger? Why will a mother see a rival—an enemy—in her daughter? These things are true. Instances of them may be met any day. It is worth while to any who form part of an uncongenial household to consider how best to alter this state of things. The sulky "you," "her," may be softened into pet names of childhood. How pleasant it is to hear an old maiden talk of "my dear brother," and he always addresses her as "sister." She was "sister," or "sissy" to him in the nursery. She is "sister" to him now, and even "sissy" when his old heart is jocund and merry. And how cosy and comfortable a word is that of "cousin." "We are cousins this and cousins that, cousins upon cousins," quoth the merry Lady G——, in *Sir Charles Grandison*. And how charming it is to have cousins upon cousins trooping in at Christmas, to eat their Christmas dinner. They may be poor relations; but all the better, they shall dine royally. They shall have useful presents on the Christmas-tree. Perhaps a home-knit pair of stockings; but, on my word, lined with some crinkly odd bits of paper. What a fine start, what a delicious glow tinges the face of the poor relation, as he looks at these bits of paper. He is very silent for a minute or two; he has to thank God, perhaps, for a gift that nothing ever came more seasonably. The children of the house, following the example of "papsy," and "mumsey," are very kind to the poor relations.

"Do take that," says a little lisping tot; "it's my very own." And she thrusts her new dolly into the aged hands of poor old cousin Polly. "Now come along with me," says the Eton heir; "here, Paine, give these boys everything on the supper-table—stuff them well—or you and I shall quarrel." "No fear of that, sir," replies the old butler, smiling; "a little champagne all round, first thing, sir." "You must dance with me, cousin Smallwood," says a dainty fairy of seventeen, conscious, up to every hair of her head, of her beauty, her importance, the imperial demeanour necessary for boys. Cousin Smallwood is a rough, shy, ugly fellow, with coloured gloves and a black waistcoat, yet Elsinore dances with him as if he were a king. She racks her still childish brains to talk on sensible matters—farming, the doings of the nation, the points of a horse.

"What on earth she sees in such a brute, to be so condescending to him 'tis impossible to say," murmur the young dandies whom she treats imperiously.

"And he doesn't realize his luck, the lout."

There, my young sir, you are wrong. Cousin Smallwood thinks Elsinore a pretty little girl enough; but what he likes about her is her kind little good-natured heart, trying to make him feel at home and comfortable. And it is his duty to let her see that she has made him more comfortable. "He will go in for another dance, if she will only tell him who would dance with him."

"Oh, cousin Smallwood, how nice of you. I do so want partners for the two Miss Smutchers. The boys always laugh so when I say their name: boys are so rude."

And it ends by cousin Smallwood dancing perpetually with first one Miss Smutcher, and then the other, all the evening. And Elsinore runs up now and then, and thanks him, saying—"How nice of you, cousin Smallwood; it is quite a weight off mine and mumsey's mind, getting those girls partners." Cousin Smallwood thanks the stars that made him come to the Christmas gathering, *malgré lui*. He really enjoyed himself, and was of use. And after this fashion how much we can do to be of use to one another, what an endless string of kindly deeds can relations perform, that it is impossible can be done by any other.

Blood is thicker than water. But it must be fine, healthy, rich blood, flowing genially from the heart; teeming over with kindly redundancy, so as to flow in rich profusion to every one connected with it.

Then the owner of such a heart is like a king. He gathers round him at Christmas-time all his relations—rich, poor, handsome, ugly, cross, or good: they are his relations, no matter what they may be. He sees nothing but that it is his duty to let all wear happy faces. He is royally kind to the humble ones. He laughs at and with the proud ones. He coaxes and drinks wine with the moody. He cannot see who is ugly or which more handsome. He finds out the meek and exalts him. He discovers a secret unhappiness and relieves it. In his relations with all his relations, he endeavours to do his duty, and succeeds as he ought to do. Brothers estranged, warm up, and, infected by his geniality, again speak to each other. Sisters, captious, envious, and snappish, kiss each other after such a Christmas, and say, "'Tis like old times." Parents think they will try to make their children's home as happy; while children are eager to deserve such another time.

Many and many a home in England may be like this described at this time. Happy are the relations belonging to them. May they return back to their own firesides, full of good, generous, charitable thoughts, realizing, if they never did before, the mighty power of the words, "Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

JULIA STRETTON.

SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

V.

A SHORT distance across the fields from the village, and in a situation which might not unjustly have been advertised as "salubrious," if Miss Russett, the lady-principal, had ever advertised, stood the Acacias, a ladies' school of high rank, containing about fifty young ladies. For reasons and in ways which will appear in their place, Cherry had many opportunities of both learning and mislearning different things from the young ladies at the Acacias, and one of the things she had learnt was keeping a diary. In this diary she used to record startling events, and passing and permanent aspirations and reflections, and always with a certain stateliness, or at least consciousness, in the style, which seemed to suppose a listener or a reader. The fly-leaf was inscribed by Cherry with the word "Diary" in as good ornamental print as she could manage to produce, the black being shaded with red, and a small white glass bead stuck in the middle of each letter, where the break occurred, after the manner of ornamental writing and printing. Besides this there was a hodge-podge hortus-siccus of southernwood, rose-leaf, and lavender; and a riband of blue sarsenet to keep the place. Underneath the word Diary had originally been written—

"Cherry White is my name,
England is my nation,
Shoemaker's Village is my dwelling-place,
And Christ is my salvation;"

but this legend was now obscure, for Cherry had scratched it out as well as she could, upon observing that Miss Russett's girls did not use to have such inscriptions in their diaries. One of her entries I shall now, as the Scotch say, condescend upon. It was as follows:—"Thursday. A most mysterious enigma has occurred in our locality. A gentleman to whom Mrs. Branch (a very religious person who keeps a pastrycook's) had sold a stale pie, has disappeared in a remarkable manner. She requested me to follow him, but as the night was very wet, I deputed *Mr. Woods* to undertake the task. Our efforts were unsuccessful, and Mrs. Branch has been ill ever since. Mother says she has a very tender conscience, and that they prayed for her at chapel last Sunday. When they pray for a female, they always call her *thine handmaid*. A pretty handmaid Mrs. Branch would make! But to pursue our subject. Mr. Embler, the pastor, has been to pray with her; and she says if she could see the hand of the Lord in it, she would be at peace, but that he hides his face. Anybody would think she had done something very wicked. I took her some flowers from my friend Miss Russett yesterday, but she is not one to see much in the *beauties of nature*. And now to return to this most remarkable enigma. On the night of this event, Captain Boldero, the drill-master at the Acacias, stayed late because of the heavy rain, but was at last compelled to take his departure, and it is stated that he stumbled over

the form of a man lying prostrate on the steps at the side gate. Captain Boldero was not at his post to-day, and some of the young ladies with whom I am on terms of intimacy, were much disappointed at missing their usual drill. It is very amusing when the first *stiffness* has gone off, but the Captain is *very strict*. His *manners* are such that I have sometimes felt if he had been of a suitable age I could have *loved* him. Mr. Woods states that there is a bill up at the police-station describing a body found dead, and it is a man of gentlemanly appearance, but in shabby attire. But till the usual steps have been taken, we shall not know whether this is the corpse of the stranger. Thus this remarkable affair remains shrouded in mystery."

This record is written with more than Cherry's usual care and dignity (though her *written* style was always much better than you would expect), as befitted the importance of the occasion. Nobody could have more of the full-dress instinct than Cherry: though she was, until comparatively late in her young life, habitually untidy in her personal appearance, *except* on state occasions—to the height of which she could invariably rise at once.

Her diary, for example, was written upon innocent stilts of imagination, and there was no practical meaning whatever in that hinted passion for Captain Boldero. A passion for Boldero! It gives me a turn to think what he would have felt if he had read such an entry in a girl's diary—even in the diary of an inscrutable child-woman like Tomboy. He was no more a captain than I am, but he had had scraps of military experience, and he was a stiff, handsome figure, standing six feet and a half with ease, and whiskers of the most threatening size and adjustment. Yet, underneath that shining bald head of his, with its two side-ridges of shiny white hair, lay one of the most timid and bashful of brains. Though he appeared to be, and evidently was, able to face a troop of girls, and make them right-about-face and set up their backs, yet I am sure it was only the number and the military associations that enabled him to go through it; and to face one woman for anything like an interview was an effort for which he must always have braced himself by some artificial means—so bashful was he when "the ladies"—as he used with bated breath to call them—were in question.

Boldero was one of the least lucky members of a somewhat unlucky family. During his youth and early manhood, he had always taken hold of facts with his left hand, and had never got on. All he undertook failed. If he had not been so shy, his handsome face and figure might, perhaps, have made his fortune, as men count of fortune; but I don't believe he ever did so much as fairly look a woman in the face. Yet he was sociable enough and free enough with men. At last, something or somebody whispered him that if he were to go and enlist, his relations might "do something" for him. In a spirit of such mild vindictiveness as he was capable of he took this advice—twice. Twice was he bought off—twice was something done for him. The third time his friends began to feel the absurdity of a great hulking handsome fellow making a market-article of his person in this way; and they left things to take their course.

After missing sight of him for some years, I came across him again at Miss Russett's. We had some casual conversation, and then, stepping aside

with me into the corner of the ante-room in which we were standing, he suddenly faltered in his talk. Evidently he had something special to say. He looked furtively at me from under his rather shaggy eyebrows, and endeavoured to put on a wicked expression of countenance.

"I've got something to tell you," said he, in an emphatic half-whisper, straightening his back, and rubbing his hands together, as if he had just made a good bargain.

"Oh, have you?" said I; "what is it?"

"Don't you know?"

"No."

"You *do* now!"—and he made a half-abortive attempt to wink.

"Really, I don't," said I; "tell me,"—winking back, to encourage him.

"Well, it's something—sexual."

As Boldero whispered this maladroit word—the maladroitness of which I knew very well to be the mere result of his bashfulness—he "retired up" closer to the wall of the room. Glooms of guilt deepened and deepened in his large eyes; and a vivid red blush suffused his face. His bald head was crimson between the white ridges. He stood like one who waited for his doom.

"Oh, indeed," said I, gaily, "I'm as glad as glad can be. What is it? Are you married?"

"No!" said he, brightening up and rubbing his hands again; "but I've formed an attachment."

And then he laughed a harmless triumphant laugh, which broadened his codfish mouth and showed all his huge white teeth, shook hands warmly, and bade me good-bye. He thought he had gone far enough for one time. And I knew I should pretty certainly have to wait for more information until he chose to give it; for nobody would ever dream of such a thing as surprising him in conversation with the "object" of his "attachment," whoever she might be. If Boldero had been engaged to Miranda on Prospero's island, Prospero might safely have spared his admonitions and denunciations. I don't believe he would ever have dared to play at chess with her, even in a dream. He would have reared for himself a hut on the extreme edge of the island, and called once a month, when he was quite sure Prospero was at home.

VI.

It was in the capacity of half-tutor, half-lecturer at the Acacias, that I first became acquainted with Shoemakers' Village at all. I was invited by Miss Russett, the principal of the establishment, to deliver some courses of lectures upon Modern Literature, and, accepting the invitation, I got through my engagements for a term or two pretty successfully; but was quite unable to go on with *that* sort of thing. You would never guess the reason, though, if you were to try for a thousand and one nights. It was my modesty; or perhaps I should say, my humility.

Never, never shall I forget my first entry into the lecture-room at the Acacias. It was a long, well-lighted hall, with benches in rows of three

deep all along the sides; at the upper end a pulpit or raised desk for the lecturer, and at the left hand of that, a sort of curule chair for Miss Russett, who sat there like a conscript mother, if there is such a thing, good-humouredly beaming out upon everybody; with her back well up, and that pouter-pigeon bosom of hers well supported or shoved up in a tight-fitting dove-coloured silk, over which hung the chain of her watch in a thin serpentine golden column. Seated along the benches were, of course, all the young ladies—oh! what a flower-bed of girls!—it makes me shrink into myself only to recall it to mind. Not that I have a single picture of a separate face before me—I never summoned courage to set up my mental photographic apparatus against a single one of those certainly youthful, and probably agreeable, not to say lovely countenances. I have, indeed, a sort of general impression of a black blot in the middle of the front row on the left hand—that was the face of Miss Golightly, the young African lady who was being educated for some exalted position on the Gold Coast—but that is my only portrait. The first time I entered that hall to deliver my weekly—or was it bi-weekly?—lecture, I was as much thrown back as if the sea itself had broken down an embankment, and made an unexpected rush at me, with the usual surge of sound. For the sweet creatures all rose as one man—I mean as one parlour-boarder—to receive the lecturer; and the rustle of their dresses, first as they got up from their seats, and then as they sat down again adjusting their skirts, was an awful sound—not at all unlike that of the sea on the shingles, in fact. I wished the floor of the lecture-room would open and swallow me up; but it didn't; and I had to walk all up that long gangway of girls to my pulpit, the cynosure, or the Cymon of all those scrutinizing eyes. How sweetly stupid I must have looked! Nor did Miss Russett's manner do anything to reassure me; for although the gayest of old maids out of school hours, she was a very conscript-motherly person *in* school hours; and the lecture was a sort of public occasion which demanded rather more solemnity and dignity than usual. However, bowing formally to Miss Russett, I ascended the pulpit, and then made, or endeavoured to make, a bow to the young ladies, devoutly hoping that I had, for the moment, George the Fourth's faculty of giving the most general bow any number of particular applications. Then I produced my notes and began to speak—with, of course, the usual experience of bashful speakers; that is to say, I felt as if my own voice was somebody else's, or that I had come to hear myself deliver a lecture. If it had been the etiquette of the place for the charming creatures to applaud, or even to hiss, or in any way to express approbation or disapprobation, it would have been pleasanter for me. But ladies never clap, or stamp, or say hear, hear! or oh, oh! or question, question! in public, I believe; and besides, Miss Russett's girls were, of course, sitting there in the character of pupils, and had no right to express any opinion of what they were told. So I had to get through my task somehow, and I did; and when I told a professor, who was delivering another and a contemporaneous course at the Acacias, that my periodical hour there was the most awful hour I ever went through in all my life, he laughed at me, and assured me he enjoyed immensely the homage of so many fair young creatures, all waiting upon the wisdom of his professorial lips.

Now I had the malice to suggest to this surely over-confident professor that he had no means of *knowing* that there was any homage in the case, and that it was quite possible those innocent maidens laughed at him when his back was turned—and he never forgave me. To his maleficent influence upon Miss Russett, added to a slight indiscretion of my own, I attribute the fact that I never was invited to deliver a third course of lectures at the Acacias. The little indiscretion was this. The fact is, being in a room with so many women—a lonely, helpless gentleman—(think of the Cerebration!)—I used to acquire a tone of feeling which (with the leave of the scientific etymologist) must be called hysterical. This exhibited itself in a tendency to laugh at everything which furnished the slightest pretext for a smile. That tendency I managed to control until one day, when I was speaking of the Scandinavians, and had to pronounce the name of Regner Hairybreeches, I burst out laughing at the very word Hairybreeches. There was no echo; not one of those young women had the humane courage to laugh too. At Miss Russett I did not dare to steal even the most furtive glance. Lucky for me I didn't! The expression of her countenance at that moment must have been something awful. Little did I then know with what terrible significance the word breeches was charged in her eyes.

Miss Russett was a plump, rosy-faced, commanding lady; a lady with a presence, who laughed with her bust in such a decided and conspicuous manner that the eyes of attentive little children were always fascinated with the manner in which her gold chain used to slide about between her neck and her waist when the black silk valley was shaken with merriment. And, indeed, Miss Russett would laugh heartily at a very simple joke; a practical joke, if innocent, would do as well as any. To laugh at her even was quite safe. "Ah well, my dear," she would say, "I dare say, now, you'd cry a little for me, if I were to die; so why shouldn't you have a laugh out of me *now*?"

But dying was the last thing Miss Russett thought of: she would not even consent to get old. Just at a time when her really over-blown maturity was pronounced by watchful connoisseurs to be on the verge of showing rusty, like a hollyhock on the turn, she surprised all her friends by sickening with an eminently juvenile complaint, after which, though everybody said she would die, she came out younger and more blooming than ever. But while she was yet *in* the mill, one of the smallest and simplest of the younger boarders asked an elder friend with whom she "chummed" in bed—

"Shall we all be forced to cry, dear, if Miss Russett dies?"

"Yes, of course," answered the monitress, who had confidence in her own resources as a mourner.

This seemed very sad to the little maid: as I know I used to feel myself when a child, that the obligation to cry for the loss of one's connections was a sort of social tax which pressed with unfair incidence upon the younger branches. The consequence was that this fair little creature went about asking advice what to do, in case of incapacity to weep on the day of the anticipated obsequies.

"Oh, take and rub your eyes with an onion!" said an impatient, white-shouldered cynic with auburn curls—who, to speak truth, ought to have

known better. However, the child did procure an onion, and hid it away in her "locker," all in readiness for the dreaded exigency.

When Miss Russett came back into society again after her attack of the measles, people were glad to see her, but were not a little surprised to be presented with fresh cards, on which Miss Russett was decisively written down by the engraver in fine bold characters as Mrs. Russett.

"My dear!" said she, laughing out like a rising sun in June; "my dear! I thought, after the measles at *my* age, I *ought* to be called Mrs. if ever anybody ought!"

It seems as if it must be impossible to explain this; but, upon being pressed, Mrs. Russett seemed, on the other hand, astonished that any one should *want* an explanation. The *rationale* of her own procedure was quite obvious to herself.

"What for, my dear? Why, because I suppose I'm out of my childhood now, if ever anybody was!"

Nobody dared to suggest that the next thing was, to go into her teens. Nor did anybody dare to joke her about the Mrs. Why should they have done so? Hannah More was Mrs., was 'she not, at about the time when the *Lyrical Ballads* were published? and Harriet Martineau is Mrs. at the present day. As for marriage, Christina Russett never meddled with the subject at all; her sentiments about matrimony were unknown, only she was presumed to regard it with horror.

The innocent little girl who hid the onion in the locker against the day of Miss Russett's funeral, stood in extreme terror of the Gold Coast.

Now the Gold Coast, who to her mind was not a human entity, whose name she always spelt in her thoughts in capital letters, with the definite article going first, to indicate that It was *ONE*, like, say the Sphinx, or the Kraken—this Gold Coast was only a black girl, sent over to the Acacias from the west coast of Africa to be educated. Her father was a blackamoor potentate in some colony—he may have been president of Liberia for what I know, and no expense was spared in accomplishments, and all the branches. By the way, I think there are few ladies' schools in which there is not a black girl? Why the Gold Coast should have been educated at the Acacias is mysterious surely rather. What did she want with the use of the globes? She ought to have been running wild in a grove of palms, with a cockatoo on her wrist, a ring in her nose, and a fig-leaf or two for attire, instead of the silks and satins she wore in England. But her great joy was to dress altogether in white. For some years after she came to the Acacias she was the terror of Miss Russett and her schoolfellows. Nobody was safe, nothing was safe, from her monkey-tricks. To exhibit any vexation at having books, drawings, or any other little school-girl stores meddled with by this shiny-faced, woolly-headed blackamoor of a girl was only to make sure of finding the trick, whatever it was, repeated at an early opportunity, with aggravations. Nor was it ever known that the Gold Coast was caught in the fact. When she could lay hold of any other girl's pomatum or hair-oil, she would empty the whole of it upon her own woolly head, till her ears and her very shoulders

dripped with grease, and then she would jump about the place, butting at the other girls. Her favourite amusement, however, was hiding at the top of the bed, and then suddenly dropping, head foremost, down the bed-post. Or she would get to the top of a high book-case or other seemingly inaccessible place, and from her elevation pounce suddenly upon the passer-by. To turn head over heels during school-time—under pretence of falling off the form—was a common trick with her. As she grew older, she became so fond of dress, and of making experiments in dress, that not a girl at the Acacias felt her things were safe. "Oh, Miss Russett, Miss Golightly has been making faces in my best white bonnet, and I shall hate it now,"—that was the sort of complaint poor Miss Russett had to bear half a dozen times a week. Before going out for a walk with the other young ladies, she had always to be carefully and separately inspected, to see that she had not in some wholly unlooked for manner made an object of herself; and not a young lady at the Acacias felt it a cheerful thing when it came to her turn to pair off with the Gold Coast for the daily promenade.

VII.

A place like Shoemakers' Village is sure to be a Paradise of Widows; including grass-widows; but Cherry White's mother was a widow of the most respectable order in her rank of life. The late Mr. White had been a waiter—a subdued, colourless sort of man, who always walked with the noiseless step of a gentleman's-gentleman, wearing very well-polished shoes (never by any chance boots) and white Berlin gloves—except on high days and holidays, when he put on a pair of half-rusty black kid, incalculably old. In his little parlour window was the framed-and-glazed announcement—"R. White, waiter. Dinner and evening parties attended. Carpets beat. Music provided on the shortest notice." He was himself a fiddler, and, in the late Sunday evenings, would perform "sacred pieces" in the parlour, to the great entertainment of the Village boys and girls, who used to assemble round the window, and listen till they got "The Fall of Babylon" by heart; some of the bolder spirits joining in chorus when they caught the half-quavering soprano of Mrs. White striking up, as she sometimes felt encouraged to do (though White rather slighted her singing faculties), the "words" of the music—

"Thus sud-den-ly shall Ba-bel fall,
And ne-ver more be found at all!"

But this was usually the signal for the cessation of the performance. The lodger—for small as the house was, there was a lodger, a fat, unmarried monthly nurse—would come tearing down-stairs, and make a dispersive rush at the children; and White, meek as he was, would say—

"My dear, you sing as if you was spelling it. It is not *staccato* till you come to the *forte* passages."

"Ah, well, my dear," says Mrs. White, with a certain devout asperity; "a poor sinner can sing the song of Moses and the Lamb without knowing the gammuck, thank the Lord."

"Gamut, my love," says White: who had been "brought up to the Church,"

as he always said; and had only a distant apprehension of what he distinguished as "persuasions;" such as that of the Particular Baptists, to whom Mrs. White adhered. Roman Catholics, indeed, he conceived of as people who wished to blow up "the government," and burn Protestants in Smith-field; for them he felt a remote and gloomy horror, which was vaguely associated in his mind with Guy Fawkes, and King Charles the Martyr; but of "persuasions" he thought with mild tolerant wonder, just as he thought of freaks of nature, such as the Pig-faced Lady and the Extraordinary Thin Man, who had flourished in his childhood. Quakers were an exception, however. There were not many of them; and he regarded them as he did a quaint inexplicable piece of carving—an elaborate Swiss toy, or the griffin's-head over a door-knocker. Generally, indeed, he was unable to comprehend how anybody could be so unsociable as to differ from his neighbours, or depart from any established way. One autumn night, when nothing appeared to threaten extreme cold, he walked out, as usual, with his pumps and his white necktie in a blue bag, to attend a party at a distance; and, having omitted to bring his great coat with him, he caught cold in the suddenly-chilled night air, and died of it in a very short time. Mrs. White, of course, stuck to Zoar, but Tomboy "took after her father," and always went to church. It was found, at the last, that White had actually accumulated a little money, and this gave the widow time to turn, and she and Cherry soon gathered round them a little dress-making business, that paid them tolerably well.

Tomboy, though the cause, or at least the means, of dressiness in others, was not herself dressy; she was one of the most naïve, not to say gauche, one of the least adorned, not to say untidy child-women (and whether she was child or woman was not always obvious) that ever lived. Cherry was a free-spoken, long-limbed girl, with light brown hair, that lay in crisp, boyish curls all round her head; with the bold, decided movements of a boy, but with a moon-like forehead, and low-bent, grey-blue eyes, such as no boy ever yet was born with, except by a fluke. She had, unquestionably, the woman's heart, for, with her mother's consent and help, she had adopted and brought up a poor little waif of a boy, who had dropped from the clouds into Shoemakers' Village one cold night in a bundle, and was provisionally, and, indeed, for some years, called Timothy. The Villagers were great at giving queer names to people, and there was much hesitation in affixing the obvious and natural surname of White to the Christian name of Timothy, which had been affixed to this little boy. There was, I believe, a double superstition about it. First, it was vaguely supposed that he might be claimed by his relations, and so get a proper surname; and, secondly, there was a still vaguer fancy that a surname might in time be "developed" out of the Timothy—that the right word would be arrived at, so to speak, by natural selection. The name Timothy was an inspiration of Cherry's own. The child might be called hers: for it was she who picked up the bundle in the village street, brought it home to her mother in much excitement, hardly knowing whether there was anything "alive" inside it or not; and it was she who insisted on keeping it, and bringing it up. It was she, too, who happened to give it its

first food under her mother's roof; and it came by its name in this wise. It appeared to Tomboy to be rather slack in taking the spoon, and, by way of influencing it to receive its milk and water at a more rapid rate, she made a dash at its little mouth with the spoon, and exclaimed, by way of encouragement, rebuke, and stimulation—

"Now THEN, TIMOTHY!" and this she said with a rapid *forte crescendo* movement which made her mother laugh, and also with a jerk which spilt the milk on the little one's forehead.

"Well, mother," says Cherry, gaily, "I've christened him at all events." And Timothy being a distinctive name, and a Scriptural one, it was retained as the appellative of this mite, who, when otherwise described, was always called "Tomboy's baby." Alliteration being a strong tendency of the Villagers, some of the looser sort manifested a strong inclination to call the baby Timothy Trot; but by the more superstitious and respectable Villagers this was rather frowned upon as a sort of ribaldry when applied to a child with such a peculiar and mysterious history.

Tomboy's quick-sightedness in finding the child, her zeal in bringing it safe to shelter, and her resolute care of it ever since, had given her a distinguished position in Shoemakers' Village, and thrown into the shade certain unfeminine qualities for which she was notorious, and for which, indeed, she was still much criticised by the more sedate and genteel public opinion of the Village. But it was only a very select few who were aware that there were moments in Cherry's inner life when Timothy presented himself to her imagination as an incumbrance! How could it be otherwise with a girl who had waking visions of eloping with a Prince, and following him to the Battle-field disguised as a Page?

I was in possession of this secret about the prince long before I even spoke to Cherry, or knew her name. The moment I set eyes on her I conceived a cloud-land passion for her, just as Campbell did for the little girl he saw in the Park one day and tried, by advertisements, to get another glimpse of. The first time I ever saw Tomboy she was taking a great bite out of an apple, so that her mouth was very much stretched; and indeed scarcely anything could be less elegant than her whole attitude and appearance. How rough her hair was! how hot she looked! How flat she was in the back, from the waist downwards; just like the wife of Noah in a child's toy ark! Of her boots I am ashamed, and also puzzled, to speak at all—they were laced *ad libitum*, and I am sure they had "sprigs" at the soles and heels, so that they made my rough little lady-love stand high. I never went with her and her mother to get her measured for a pair, but I know as well as possible what the old girl would say to the shoe-man:—

"Now, you know, you must put a fewish sprigs in the soles and heels; because she's always on her feet, except when she's in bed; and make 'em full large, for she grows like marrows."

The marrow was much cultivated in the Village; and there is scarcely a handsomer sight, I think, than that yellow trumpet flower with the dew on it in a morning sun.

Biting her apple with half-unconscious zest, and showing as she did so

teeth as white and clean as falling snow, my Tomboy stood looking in at the window of a small shop in the village. It was half toy-shop and half stationer's; and her great grey-blue eyes were fixed upon a "character," all ready tinselled and dressed up in velvet and satin for the theatrical youth of the village to worship. It was a Prince! Miss Somebody as Prince Something in the Enchanted Everything and Everyone! The Prince, for tinsel is mighty, had silver legs and golden spurs, and helmet of shining steel; his tunic was glossy blue satin, his waistbelt shone with jewellery; round his neck was a silver hunting horn, which swung free from a chain of gold; and in the distance was a brilliantly-saddled inconceivable pony, arching his neck, and pawing the ground, like an undertaker's horse at a funeral.

This beautiful Prince was Tomboy's first love. Attracted by the flat, energetic back, the rough hair, the unfashionable get-up of the girl, and, I confess it, the solid shapely legs, discovered by her outgrown skirts, I went up to the window, and furtively watched the child-woman with the apple. I discerned her passion for the Prince, and fell hopelessly in love with her myself. *My* passion formed a thousand pictures directly.

How I should like to be wrecked on a desert-island, with this apple-cheeked, great growing doll of a girl! I would build her a palace of a hut within call of my own, and wait on her will as if she were an empress or better. How I should delight to watch the way in which she took the endless girdling sea; the sunrise, the sunset, the stars like drops of light; the flamingo in the creek, the green-red parrot in the wood, and the savages that would be sure one day to visit us in a canoe! How pleasant it would be to build a boat, and row her round the island now and then! How nice to listen to her wise simplicities, and unabashed wonderings, and see her grow strong and lithe, sprinkled with the foam of the clean fresh sea, and stained, like a berry, by the friendly familiar sun!

Or, again. How I should like to play prince to her. Conceive it. I go into the little shop, buy the tinselled "character" for a pattern, and, having recourse to a theatrical wardrobe shop, get myself up exactly like. Then, at some improbable moment, I ride up to Tomboy's mother's door, and saying, "What ho, my love! within there!" beckon her forth, lift her to the saddle-tree in front of me, and so away, away, to the nearest railway station, where I put the pony into a box, and take a first-class ticket to the Shetland Isles for Tomboy and me!

One of the strongest of Cherry's early ambitions was, undoubtedly, to be a robber's wife; to live in a cave underground, with a trap-door to it, grown over with grass, and with subterranean passages by means of which she might issue at will into the open of the surrounding country. Where this country should be was of no consequence—Cherry never thought about that, any more than she thought about the functions of a wife. Of these she had so little idea that her cherished notion was, in truth, that of being the wife of the robbers—not of any robber in particular, but of the whole band, captain, lieutenant, "pioneers and all." Her chief duty would be to bind up sword-cuts; to listen at the trap-door for the tramp of the horses' feet upon the return of an expedition; to prepare savoury messes—they were to be *savoury*, mind,

with plenty of steam—in a great four-legged caldron; and, now and then when the band were on tramp, and her favourite bandit in danger, to throw herself between him and the butt-end of a blunderbuss; saying, with imperious gesture, "Vile hound! would you strike a female?" This Cherry had learnt in the *London Journal*.

If these delightful visions ever varied, it was when Cherry imagined herself a Smuggler's Bride, residing in a cleft of the rock like a seabird. But she hated drunkenness, and had a vague idea—derived from a picture entitled "Smugglers Carousing," with a companion picture called "Smugglers Surprised,"—that smugglers *drank* all the spirits they got hold of, so that she hardly relished them as well as she did robbers.

At the time at which I first knew her too, Cherry White kept a 'raculum, for which she was much teased by that dull, heavy, epileptic, spiteful Melia Luckin. "Cherry's proud this morning! She's been dipping in her 'raculum, and the Prince is coming!" Now the 'raculum was Napoleon's Celebrated Oraculum, or Book of Fate, a fortune-telling book, now out of fashion, but of which a tattered copy, greased and pin-pricked (through dipping in the mysteriously dotted Magic Wheel), had descended to Cherry through a sort of Jacob's ladder of housemaids, who, having got married, had no further use for the 'raculum, and politely passed it on to anxious and revering virgins. It was well known, through the kind intervention of Melia Luckin, to all the village that Cherry had a 'raculum, and consulted it in secret! She kept it in a small wooden box under her bed, along with a scent bottle in which the stopper had long been fixed; a franc piece, which she considered a great curiosity; a torn sheet of printed music, which she used to look at with awe and desire; and a very well thumbed instruction book for the concertina, which she hoped some day to match with an instrument and apply to its proper use, in learning to play. But besides these maidenly trifles, Cherry White had once, with less than her usual discretion, displayed to a confidential friend—a gorgeously tinselled Character—nothing less than a Prince! Indeed he was so labelled. And the quick deductive genius of the confidential but uncommunicative friend, assisted by the malice of that ugly little female *avvocato del diavolo*, Amelia Luckin, had easily reached the conclusion that when Cherry shut her nice large eyes and dipped with a pin in the Magic Wheel of the 'raculum for an answer to the question, Shall I obtain my wish?—she wished for a Prince!

This may not be an improper place for saying something upon the etiquette, or physiology of sweethearting, in the neighbourhood which so well knew Tomboy.

The chief, or, at all events, the most obvious, elements of love-making in Shoemakers' Village, were cheap cigars, pomatum, and concertinas. Now and then, here and there, an enamoured couple, true to the natural instincts of young affection, did their billing and cooing in secluded streets that led off into the fields; but the pavements were so bad in streets of that kind that it was only the *infatuated* pairs who were ready to undergo the inconvenience of walking there. The sweethearting youth of the Village for the most part preferred to transact their billing and cooing in the nearest large populous

street; the town, as it was called. On a fine, or half fine, Sunday evening, this street was the appointed promenade of our striplings and sliplings; hobbledehoyes and damsels. They went at it pretty early in the Village: I have known a lass of eleven have a young man; thirteen was *comme-il-faut*; a girl who at fourteen had no followers was considerably behind the destiny of woman. The youths began when they pleased: it was entirely a question of impudence and coat-tails; sweethearting in a jacket is in most parts counted abnormal. But when Cherry was taunted with the fact that one of her admirers had a jacket on, she took his part with great spirit.

"I should be ashamed, if I was you," said a spiteful rival, "to be seen talking to a boy like that, with nothing to cover him but a jacket."

"Should you?" says Cherry; "and I suppose you never went out with a soldier? Talk about jackets!—if there's anything to laugh at in that, what's a soldier's back? I call it a fright. How a woman can be seen walking with a soldier is a phantom to me; with his clothes fitting him as if they'd been glued to him."

Naturally, the evening of Sunday was the great courting-time, the *Pervigilium Veneris*, in the Village, when the signal went round—

"Let those love now, who never loved before,
And those who always loved, now love the more!"

But the preparations began on the Saturday evening. Then you might see the maidenhood of the place, hanging in groups round the drapers' shops, deep in council on the killing get-up for the morrow. In the Village I have observed that it takes four girls to buy one ribbon—such is the gregariousness of the female population. Are girls like that anywhere else? The purchase of such amatory necessities as peppermint drops, ginger lozenges, rose lozenges, and even *cosmetique*, might be postponed till the morrow, for chemists' shops open on Sunday, after morning church, you know. But the great token of all that on the next day our Village would sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neæra's hair, was the prevalence of curl-papers on the heads of the damsels. This was quite a spectacle. Some women would no more think of walking the streets with their hair in paper than they would in a nightgown; but our young ladies were more frank and less scrupulous. Nor do I believe the enamoured youth of the place felt that there was any indelicacy in the practice. Most of us would rather have the results in these matters without seeing the process; and even where we *must* see, we ignore; we take Venus as she is, and assume that she has risen, all complete, from the sea-foam. But the lover in the Village must, I think, have looked upon all this preparation as a compliment to himself, which made the display natural and proper. So you might see the swains, in knots, in their working dresses many of them, furtively watching the beauties at a distance, as they went about their shopping, their heads bedropped with twists of *London Journal* till there was more paper than hair to be seen.

It is with a touch of masculine shyness that I refer to *cosmetique*. What is it, and what is it for? You shall hear. On Sundays, and in general on high days and holidays and all state occasions, a change came over the eye-

brows of the young maidenhood of Shoemakers' Village. They were rounder, thicker, darker, longer, every way more defined. What did this? Speak it softly—the *cosmetique*. This is a black substance, in the nature of pomatum, sold, like chocolate, in little cakes covered with ornamental paper: and with it the eyebrows of the maiden are painted, arched, deepened, and elongated. This is supposed to give a Circassian expression to the countenance, and is greatly admired. It had an enemy, however, in the Village, namely, the sweet Amelia Luckin. Her own eyebrows were thick enough for two, and she resented, with her usual good-nature, the use of this heightening toilet article, by other girls. On one occasion, when poor little Miss Salmon, who had no beauty to spare, was sitting at tea with a few other young ladies, with the shrimps, the watercresses, and other delicacies spread for the expected Corydon, Miss Luckin, who had secretly wetted her pocket-handkerchief, made a sudden dash at Norah Salmon's eyebrows.

"Oh, my!" she exclaimed, "what have you got on your forehead?"

"What is it?" says frightened Norah, "is it a spider?"

"Ya—a—h!" screamed the rest of the company—it is high-polite in the Village to express sympathy by screaming. In the meanwhile, Amelia had gained her end; she had, by scrubbing at Norah's eyebrow, made a smudge upon her face and forehead. By one of those rapid transitions of feeling, in which very gregarious people are apt to betray that their natures are not quite as deep as they are fluent, the kind friends now laughed in concert, as heartily as they had screamed just before. But the story was solemnly hushed up, and never *generally* known in the village. The line must be drawn somewhere—the maids of the village drew it at *cosmetique*. Men might see their curl papers, but there they must stop. It is gratifying to be able to add that one of the young ladies present on this occasion immediately volunteered the loan of her own *cosmetique*, and that Miss Salmon's Circassian *cachet de beauté* was restored before the appearance of her lover.

On a Sunday evening, when the lovers were out in great force, perambulating the streets, the neighbourhood positively smelt of pomatum; the whiff you got in passing some of these smart young couples was almost overpowering. It is true there was the smell of the cigars to vary it, or mix with it; but was that an improvement or an aggravation? And then there was the music. The butcher-boy, or the news-boy, or the doctor's-boy, selected his corner; a little out of the main current of the traffic, and there tossed his cheap concertina backwards and forwards, like a pancake or a dumpling that had stuck to the hands, playing as well as he could one of the tunes "figured" for him in his instruction book. The villagers had much joy in their concertinas. Tomboy in time bought one; and it was a fine sight to see her learning it. Her plan was to sit on the floor, so that if Timothy fell, his fall would be slight. Timothy was in her lap; with both hands she held the concertina by the straps, and the instruction book lay at her side. In this manner she conciliated the safety of Timothy, her own comfort, and the study of music.

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART I.—HIS BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER XI.

ROBERT'S PLAN OF SALVATION.

FOR some time after the loss of his friend, Robert went loitering and mooning about, quite neglecting the lessons to which he had not, it must be confessed, paid much attention for many weeks. Even when seated at his grannie's table, he did no more than fix his eyes on his book, and seem to her to be learning. But his was a nature which, foiled in one direction, would instantly begin to send its searching roots out in another. Of all irresistible forces, that of growth is the most irresistible, for it is the creating power of God, the law of life and of being. Therefore no accumulation of refusals, and checks, and turnings, and forbiddings, from all the good old grannies in the world, could have prevented Robert from striking root downward and bearing fruit upward, though, as in all higher natures, the fruit was a long way off yet. He was not unhappy, for he had been guilty of nothing that weighed on his conscience. Although he had been doing many things of late without asking leave of his grandmother, yet wherever there is the conviction that prayer is of no avail, there can never be the sense of the obligation to submit save on compulsion. Even direct disobedience in such case will generally leave very little soreness, except, indeed, the thing forbidden should be in its own nature wrong, and then "Don Worm, the conscience," may begin to bite. But Robert felt nothing immoral in playing upon his grandfather's violin, nor even in taking liberties with a piece of lumber for which nobody cared but possibly the dead; therefore he was not unhappy, only much disappointed, very empty, and somewhat gloomy. There was nothing to look forward to now, no secret full of riches and endless in hope—in short, no violin.

To feel the full force of his loss, my reader must remember that around the childhood of Robert, which he was just leaving behind him, there had gathered no tenderness, none at least by him recognizable as such. All the women he came in contact with were his grandmother and Betty. He had not the faintest recollection of having ever been kissed. From the darkness and negation of such an existence, his nature had been unconsciously striving to escape—struggling to get from below ground into the free air—sighing after a freedom he could not have defined, the freedom that comes, not of independence, but of love—not of lawlessness, but of the perfection of law. Of this beauty of life, with its wonder and its deepness, this unknown glory, his fiddle had been the type. It had been the ark that held, if not the tables of the covenant, yet the golden pot of angel's food, and the rod that budded

in death. And now that it was gone, the gloomier aspect of things began to lay hold upon him; his soul turned itself away from the sun, and entered into the shadow of the under-world. For like the white-horsed twins or lake Regillus, like Phœbe, the queen of skyey plain and earthly forest, every boy and girl, every man and woman, that lives at all, has to divide many a year between Tartarus and Olympus.

And now arose within him, not without ultimate good, the evil phantasms of a theology which would explain all God's doings by low conceptions, low I mean for humanity even, of right, and law, and justice, then only taking refuge in the fact of the incapacity of the human understanding when its own inventions are impugned as undivine. In such a system, hell is invariably the deepest truth, and the love of God is not so deep as hell. Hence, as foundations must be laid in the deepest, their system is founded in hell, and the first article in the creed that Robert Falconer learned was, "I believe in hell." Practically, I mean, it was so; else how should it be that as often as a thought of religious duty arose in his mind, it appeared in the form of escaping hell, of fleeing from the wrath to come? For his very nature was hell, being not born *in* sin and brought forth *in* iniquity, but born sin and brought forth iniquity. And yet God made him. He must believe that. And he must believe, too, that God was just, awfully just, punishing with fearful pains those who did not go through a certain process of mind which it was utterly impossible they could go through without a help which he would give to some and withhold from others, the reason of the difference not being such as to come within the reach of the persons concerned. It was logically absurd to say that such a God was love. Yet, thank God, they did say that God was love; and many of them succeeded in believing it too, and in ordering their ways as if the first article of their creed had been "I believe in God," which, therefore, we are bound to say it was in reason, if not in order; for what are we to say a man believes, if not what he acts upon? But the former article was the one they brought chiefly to bear upon their children. This mortar, probably, they thought, threw the shell straighter than the other field-pieces of the church-militant. Hence it was even in justification of God himself that a party arose to say that a man could believe without the help of God at all, and then he had God's help—a heresy all but as dreary and barren as the former. Not one dreamed of saying—at least such a glad sound never reached Rothieden—that, while nobody could do without the help of the Father any more than a new-born babe could of itself live and grow to a man, yet that in the giving of that help the very fatherhood of the Father finds its one gladsome labour; that for that the Lord came; for that the world was made; for that we are born into it; for that God lives and loves like the most loving man or woman on earth, only infinitely more, and in other ways and kinds besides, which we cannot understand; and that therefore to be a man is the soul of eternal jubilation.

Robert began to take fits of soul-saving, a most rational exercise, worldly wise and prudent—right too on the principles he had received, but not in the least Christian in its nature, or even God-fearing. The loss of his violin left him so depressed that his imagination began to busy itself in representing the

dire consequences of not entering into the one refuge of faith. He therefore made many frantic efforts to believe that he believed; took to keeping the Sabbath very carefully, that is, going to church three times, and to the Sunday-school as well; never walking a step save to or from church; never saying a word upon any subject but one connected with religion, chiefly theoretical; never reading anything but religious books; never whistling; never thinking of his lost fiddle—and so on, all the time feeling that God was ready to pounce upon him if he failed once; till again and again the intensity of his efforts utterly defeated their object by destroying for the time the desire to prosecute them with the power to will them. But through the horrible vapours of these vain endeavours, which denied God altogether as the maker of the world and the former of his soul and heart and brain, and sought to worship him as a capricious demon, there broke a little light, a little soothing, soft twilight, through the dim windows of such literature as came in his way. Besides *The Pilgrim's Progress* there were several books which shone moon-like on his darkness and lifted something of the weight of that Egyptian gloom off his spirit. One of these, strange to say, was Defoe's *Religious Courtship*, and another Young's *Night Thoughts*. But there was one which, in particular, deserves a separate mention, because it did far more than merely interest or amuse him, raising a deep question in his mind, and one worthy to be asked. This book was the prose translation of Klopstock's *Messiah*, to which I have already referred. It was scarcely one of his grandmother's books, had probably belonged to his father, and he had found it, not amongst hers, but in his little garret room. But she had more than once found him reading it, and had been rather pleased he thought, though of course she would not readily show that she was. Its florid expatiation could neither offend nor injure a boy like Robert, and represented our Lord in a way which, not to stop to criticise it, was a wonderful relief from the representations given of him in the pulpit, and in all the religious books he knew anything about. But the point for the sake of which I refer to it in particular is this: Amongst the rebel angels who are of the actors in the story, one of the principal is a cherub who repents of making his choice with Satan, mourns over his apostasy, haunts unseen the steps of our Saviour, wheels lamenting about the cross, and would gladly return to his lost duties in heaven, if only he might—a question which I believe is left unsettled in the volume. Naturally enough, the question arose in Robert's mind—Would poor—I forget what was the angel's name—be forgiven and taken home again? Did I say *naturally*? Naturally there could be no question about it. But I meant naturally for him in the unnatural circumstances of the teaching he had; according to which, there could be no question of the uselessness of any attempt at reconciliation. But Robert ventured to doubt, nay, to support the opposite side of the argument in his own mind; for, having no one else to talk to on the subject, he had to "divide himself and go to buffets" about it. He tried once with Shargar and once with his grandmother. All, however, that the conversation came to with the former was this:

"Shargar, what think ye? Gin a deil war to repent, wad God forgie him?"

"There's no sayin' what fowk wad du till ance they're tried," returned Shargar, cautiously,

And Robert did not care to resume the question with one who so circumspectly refused to take a metaphysical or *à priori* view of the matter.

What it came to with his grandmother, was as follows:

One Sunday, Robert's thoughts after trying for some time to revolve in due orbit around the mind of the Rev. Hugh McCleary, as embodied in a sermon which he had botched up out of a commentary, failed at last, and flew off into what the said gentleman would have pronounced "very dangerous speculation, seeing no man is to go beyond what is written, the Bible containing not only the truth, but the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, for this time and for all future time—both here and in the world to come." Some such sentence, at least, was in his sermon that day, he forgetting that not St. Matthew, but Matthew Henry, was the source of it. In the Limbo into which Robert's spirit flew, it was sorely exercised with speculations founded on the substitution of the sufferings of Christ for those which humanity must have endured while ages rolled on—mere billows on the ocean of eternity.

"Noo, be douce," said Mrs. Falconer, solemnly, as Robert, a trifle lighter at heart than usual, sat down to dinner: he had happened to smile across the table to Shargar. And Robert was douce, and smiled no more.

They ate their broth, or, more properly, *supped* it, with horn spoons, in absolute silence; after which Mrs. Falconer put a large piece of meat on the plate of each, with the same formula.

"Ye s' get nae mair."

The allowance was ample in the extreme, bearing a relation to her words similar to that which her practice bore to her theology. A piece of cheese, because it was the Sabbath, followed, and dinner was over.

When the table had been cleared by Betty, they drew their chairs to the fire, and Robert had to read to his grandmother. He had not read long, however, before he looked up from his Bible and began the following conversation:—

"Wasna it an ill trick o' Joseph, gran'mither, to put that cup, an' a siller ane tu, into the mou' o' Benjamin's seck?"

"What for that, laddie? He wanted to fess them back again, ye ken."

"But he needna hae gane aboot it in sic a play-actor-like gait. He needna hae latten them awa' ohn tellt (*without telling*) them that he was their brither."

"They had behaved verra ill til him."

"He used to clype (*tell tales*) upo' them, though."

"Laddie, tak' ye care what ye say about Joseph, for he was a teep o' Christ."

"Hoo was that, gran'mither?"

"They sellt him to the Ishmeelets for siller, as Judas did him."

"Did he beir the sins o' them 'at sellt him?"

"Ye may say, in a mainner, 'at he did; for he was sair afflickit afore he wan up to be the King's richt han'; an' syne he keepit a hantle o' ill aff o' s' brithren."

"Sae, gran'mither, ither fowk nor Christ micht suffer for the sins o' their neebors?"

"Ay, laddie, mony a ane does. But no to mak' atonement, ye ken. Nae-thing but the sufferin' o' the spotless culd du that. The Lord wadna be saitisfeet wi' less nor that. It maun be the innocent to suffer for the guilty."

"I unnerstan' that," said Robert, who had heard it so often that he had not yet thought of trying to understand it. "But gin we gang to the gude place, we'll be a' innocent syne, willna we, grannie?"

"Ay, that we will; washed spotless, and pure, and clean, and dressed i' the weddin' garment, and set doon at the table wi' Him and wi' his Father. That's them 'at believes in him, ye ken."

"Of coorse, grannie. Weel, ye see, I hae been thinkin' o' a plan for maist han' toomin' (*almost emptying*) hell."

"What's i' the bairn's heid noo? Troth, ye're no blate, meddlin' wi' sic subjects, laddie!"

"I dinna want to say onything to vex ye, grannie. I s' gang on wi' the chapter."

"Ow, say awa'. Ye sanna say muckle 'at's wrang afore I cry *haud*," said Mrs. Falconer, curious to know what had been moving in the boy's mind, but watching him like a cat, ready to spring upon the first visible hair of the old Adam.

And Robert, recalling the outbreak of terrible grief which he had heard on that memorable night, really thought that his project would bring comfort to a mind burdened with such care, and went on with the exposition of his plan.

"A' them 'at sits doon to the supper o' the Lamb 'll sit there because Christ suffert the punishment due to their sins—willna they, grannie?"

"Dooftless, laddie."

"But it 'll be some sair upo' them to sit there aitin' an' drinkin' an' talkin' awa', an' enjoyin' themsel's, whan ilka noo an' than there 'll come a sough o' wailin' up frae the ill place, an' a smell o' burning' ill to bide."

"What put that i' yer heid, laddie? There's no rizzon to think that hell's sae near haven as a' that. The Lord forbid it!"

"Weel, but, grannie, they'll ken 't a' the sanie, whether they smell 't an hear 't, or no. An' I canna help thinkin' that the farer awa' I thought they war, the waur I wad like to think upo' them."

"What are ye drivin' at, laddie? I canna unnerstan' ye," said Mrs. Falconer, feeling very uncomfortable, and yet curious, almost anxious, to hear what would come next. "I trust we winna hae to think muckle——"

But here she paused, and Robert took up his parable and went on, first with yet another question.

"Duv ye think, grannie, that a body wad be allooted to speik a word i' public, like, there—at the lang table, like, I mean?"

"What for no, gin a' was dune wi' modesty, and for a good rizzon? But raily, laddie, I doobt ye're haverin' a'thegither. Ye hard naething like that, I'm sure, the day, frae Mr. McCleary."

"Na, na; he said naething about this. But maybe I'll gang and speir at him aboot it."

"Aboot what, than?"

"What I'm gaein' to tell ye."

"Weel, tell awa', and hae dune wi' 't. I'm growin' tired o' 't."

It was something else than tired she was growing.

"Weel, I'm gaein' to try a' that I can to win in there."

"I houp ye will. Strive and pray. Resist the deevil. Walk i' the licht. Lippen not to yersel', but trust in Christ and his salvation."

"Ay, ay, grannie. Weel——"

"Are ye no dune yet?"

"Na. I'm but jist beginnin'."

"Beginnin', are ye? Humph!"

"Weel, gin I win there, the verra first nicht I sit doon wi' the lave o' them, I'm gaein' to rise up and say—that is, gin the Maister, at the heid o' the table, disna bid me sit doon—and say: 'Brithers and sisters, the hail o' ye, hearken to me for ae minute; an', O Lord! gin I say wrang, jist tak' the speech frae me, and I'll sit doon dumb an' rebukit. We're a' here by grace and no by merit, save His, as ye a' ken better nor I can tell ye, for ye hae been langer here nor me. But it's jist ruggin' and rivin' at my hert to think o' them 'at's doon there. Maybe ye can hear them. I canna. Noo, we hae nae merit, an' they hae nae merit, an' what for are we here and them there? But we're washed clean and innocent noo; and noo, when there's no wyte lying upo' oursel's, it seems to me that we micht beir some o' the sins o' them 'at hae ower mony. I call upo' ilk' ane o' ye 'at has a frien' or a neebor down yonner, to rise up and taste nor bite nor sup mair till we gang up a'the-gither to the fut o' the throne, and pray the Lord to lat's gang and du as the Maister did afore's, and beir their griefs, and cairry their sorrows doon in hell there; gin it maybe that they may repent and get remission o' their sins, an' come up here wi' us at the lang last, and sit doon wi' 's at this table, a' throuw the merits o' our Saviour Jesus Christ, at the heid o' the table there. Amen.'"

Half ashamed of his long speech, half overcome by the feelings fighting within him, and altogether bewildered, Robert burst out crying like a baby, and ran out of the room, and up to his own place of meditation, where he threw himself down on the floor. Shargar, who made neither head nor tail of it all, as he said afterwards, sat staring at Mrs. Falconer. She rose, and going into Robert's little bedroom, closed the door, and what she did there is not far to seek.

When she came out, she rang the bell for tea, and sent Shargar to look for Robert. When he appeared, she was so gentle to him that it woke quite a new sensation in him. But after tea was over, she said,—

"Noo, Robert, lat's hae nae mair o' this. Ye ken as weel's I du that them 'at gangs *there* their doom is fixed, and naething *can* alter 't. An' we're not to alloo our ain fancies to cairry 's ayont the Scripiter. We hae oor ain salvation to work out wi' fear and trimlin'. We hae naething to do wi' what's hidden. Luik ye till 't 'at ye win in yersel'. That's eneuch for you to min'. Shargar, ye can gang to the kirk. Robert's to bide wi' me the nicht."

Mrs. Falconer very rarely went to church, for she could not hear a word, and found it irksome.

When Robert and she were alone together,

"Laddie," she said, "be ye ware o' judgin' the Almichty. What luiks to

you a' wrang may be a' richt. But it's true eneuch 'at we dinna ken a' thing; and he's no deid yet—I dinna believe 'at he is—and he'll maybe win in yet."

Here her voice failed her, and Robert had nothing to say now. He had said all his say before.

"Pray, Robert, pray for yer father, laddie," she resumed; "for we hae muckle rizzon to be anxious aboot him. Pray while there's life an' houp. Gie the Lord no rist. Pray till him day an' nicht, as I do, that he wad lead him to see the error o' his ways an' turn to the Lord, wha 's ready to pardon. Gin yer mother had lived, I wad hae had mair houp, I confess, for she was a braw leddy and a bonny, and *that* sweet-tongued! She cud hae wiled a maukin frae its lair wi' her bonnie Hielan' speech. I never likit to hear nane o' them speyk the Erse, it was aye sae gloggie and baneless; and I cudna unnerstan' ae word o' 't. Nae mair did yer father—hoot! yer gran'father, I mean—though his father culd speyk it weel. But to hear yer mother—mamma, as ye used to ca' her aye, efter the new fashion—to hear her speyk English, that was sweet to the ear; for the braid Scots she kent as little o' as I do o' the Erse. It was hert's care aboot him that shortent her days. And a' that 'll be laid upo' him. He'll hae 't a' to beir an' account for. Och hone! Och hone! Eh, Robert, my man, be a guid lad, an' serve the Lord wi' a' yer hert, an' sowl, an' stren'th, an' min'; for gin ye gang wrang, yer ain father 'll hae to beir naebody kens hoo muckle o' the wyte o' 't, for he's dune naething to bring ye up i' the way ye suld gang, an' haud ye oot o' the ill gait. For the sake o' yer puir father, haud ye to the richt road. It may spare him a pang or twa i' the ill place. Eh, gin the Lord wad only tak' me and lat him gang!"

Involuntarily and unconsciously the mother's love was adopting the hope which she had denounced in her grandson. And Robert saw it, but he was never the man when I knew him to push a victory. He said nothing. Only a tear or two at the memory of the wayworn man, his recollection of whose visit I have already recorded, rolled down his cheeks. His grandmother, herself weeping fast and silently with scarce altered countenance, took her neatly-folded handkerchief from her pocket, and wiped her grandson's fresh cheeks, and then wiped her own withered face; and from that moment Robert knew that he loved her.

Then followed the Sabbath-evening prayer that she always offered with the boy, whichever he was, who kept her company. They knelt down together, side by side, in a certain corner of the room, the same, I doubt not, in which she knelt at her private devotions before going to bed. There she uttered a long extempore prayer, earnest and simple, rapid in speech, full of divinity and scripture-phrases, but not the less earnest, and springing from a heart of faith. Then Robert had to pray after her, loud in her ear, that she might hear him thoroughly, so that he often felt as if he were praying to her, and not to God at all. She had begun to teach him to pray so early that the custom reached beyond the confines of his memory. At first he had had to repeat the words after her; but soon she made him construct his own utterances, occasionally giving him a suggestion in the form of a petition when he

seemed likely to break down, or putting a phrase into what she considered more suitable language. But all such assistance she had given up long ago.

On the present occasion, after she had ended her prayers with those for Jews and pagans, and especially for the "Pop' o' Rom'," in whom with a rare liberality she took the kindest interest, she turned to Robert with the usual "Noo, Robert;" and Robert began. But after he had gone on for some time with the ordinary phrases, he turned all at once into a new track, and instead of praying for "those that would not walk in the right way," in general terms, said,

"O Lord! save my father;" and there paused.

"If it be Thy will," suggested his grandmother.

But Robert continued silent. His grandmother repeated the subjunctive clause.

"I'm tryin', grandmother," said Robert, "but I canna say 't. I daurna say an *if* about it. It wad be like giein' in till 's damnation. We *maun* hae him saved, grannie!"

"Laddie! laddie! haud yer tongue!" said Mrs. Falconer, in a tone of awe. "O Lord! forgive him. He's young an' disna ken better yet. He canna unnerstan' thy ways, nor, for that maitter, can I preten' to unnerstan' them mysel'. But thoo art a' licht, and in thee is no darkness at all. And thy licht comes into oor blin' een, and mak's them blinner yet. But yet, O Lord! gin it wad please thee to hear oor prayer eh! hoo we wad praise thee! And my Andrew wad praise thee mair nor ninety and nine o' them 'at need nae repentance."

A long pause followed. And then the only words that would come were: "For Christ's sake. Amen."

They rose from their knees; and Mrs. Falconer sat down by her fire in the twilight, with her feet on her little wooden stool, and began, as indeed she did far oftener than she had any suspicion of, to review her past life, and follow her lost son through far different conditions and circumstances from those through which he was really passing. But she did not indulge her imagination only upon earthly things. The world to come would no doubt arise before her, clothed in all the glories which fancy, chilled by education and years, could supply, to vanish in the gloom of the remembrance of him with whom she dared hardly hope to share its blessedness. This at least is how Falconer interpreted the sudden changes from gladness to gloom which he saw at such times on her countenance.

Truly but a small portion of the universe of thought was enlightened by the glowworm lamp of the theories she had been taught; but she was not limited for light to that feeble source. While she walked on, the moon, unseen herself behind the clouds, illuminated the whole landscape so gently and evenly that the glowworm was the only visible point of radiance, and therefore all the light was attributed to it. And she felt bound to go on believing as she had been taught; for sometimes the most original mind has the strongest sense of law upon it, and will, in default of a better, obey a beggarly one, until the higher law that swallows it up manifests itself. Obedience was as essential an element of her creed as of that of any purest-

minded monk ; neither being sufficiently impressed with this : that, while obedience is the law of the kingdom, it is of considerable importance that that which is obeyed should be in very truth the will of God. It is one thing, and a good thing, to do for God's sake that which is not his will : it is another thing, and altogether a better thing—how much better, no words can tell—to do for God's sake that which is his will. Mrs. Falconer's submission and obedience led her to accept as the will of God, lest she should be guilty of opposition to him, that which it was anything but giving honour to him to accept as such. Therefore her love to God was too like the love of the slave or the dog ; too little like the love of the child, with whose obedience the Father cannot be satisfied until he cares for his reason as the highest form of his will. The child who most desires to know not the outside law, but the inward will or reason of the Father, will be the most ready to go without it, to obey or submit, and wait. But for this, the will, the command must be plain. And such commands or expressions of the divine will show themselves, I think, only in the realm of individual experience.

This burden she again laid upon Robert—not unkindly, but as that which belonged to the race, and which he must learn to bear. Her authority over him was modelled upon that which she recognized as God's over her. "Speir nae questons, but gang an' du as ye're tellt." Nor was it a bad lesson—far from it. If he was not told why, he had simply to go and obey without—a great point in preparation for the dealings of what people call *Providence*. Only she concealed her reasons without reason ; and God *makes* no secrets. Hence she seemed more stern and less sympathetic than she really was.

Thus she sat with her feet on the little wooden stool, and Robert sat beside her staring into the fire, till they heard the outer door open, and Shargar and Betty came in from church.

CHAPTER XII.

ROBERT'S MOTHER.

EARLY on the following morning, while she, and Robert, and Shargar were at breakfast, Mr. Lammie called upon Mrs. Falconer. He had delayed communicating the intelligence he had received till he should be more certain of its truth. Considerably younger than her late husband, he had yet been a great friend of his, and likewise of some of the branches of the old lady's own family. Therefore he was received with a kindly welcome. But there was a cloud on his brow which in a moment revealed to Mrs. Falconer that his errand was not a pleasant one.

"I haena seen ye for a lang time, Mr. Lammie. Gae butt the hoose, lads. Or I'm thinkin' it maun be schule-time. Sit ye doon, Mr. Lammie, and lat's hear yer news."

"I cam' frae Aberdeen last nicht, Mrs. Faukner," he began.

"Ye haena been hame sin'syne?" she rejoined.

"Na. I sleepit at the Boar's Heid."

"What gart ye be at that expense, whan ye ken I hae a bed i' the ga'le-room?"

"Weel, ye see, they're auld frien's o' mine, and I like to gang there whan I'm i' the gait o' 't."

"Weel, they're a fine faimily, the Miss Napers. And, I wat, sin they maun sell drink, they du 't wi' discretion. That's weel kent."

Possibly Mr. Lammie, remembering the night previously recorded, may have thought the discretion a little in excess of the drink, but he had other business on hand now.

"There's been some ill news, they tell me, Mrs. Faulkner."

"Humph!" said the old lady, her face turning stony with the effort to suppress all emotion. "Nae about Anerew?"

"'Deed is 't, mem. An' ill news, I'm sorry to say."

"Is he ta'en?"

"Ay is he—by a jayler that winna tyne the grup."

"He's no deid, John Lammie? Dinna say 't."

"I maun say 't, Mrs. Faulkner. I had it frae Dr. Anderson, yer ain cousin. He hintit at it afore, but his last letter leaves nae room to doobt upo' the subjeck. I'm unco sorry to be the beirer o' sic ill news, Mrs. Faulkner, but I had nae chice."

"Ohone! Ohone! the day o' grace is by! My puir Anerew!" exclaimed Mrs. Falconer, and sat dumb thereafter.

Mr. Lammie tried to comfort her with some of the usual comfortless commonplaces. She neither wept nor replied, but sat with stony face, looking into her lap, till Mr. Lammie, seeing that she was as one that heareth not, rose and left her alone with her grief. No sooner was he gone than she rang the bell, and told Betty, in her usual voice, to send Robert to her.

"He's gane to the schule, mem."

"Rin efter him, an' tell him to come hame."

When Robert appeared, wondering what his grandmother could want with him, she said:

"Close the door, Robert. I canna lat ye gang to the schule the day—we maun lea' him oot noo."

"Lea' wha oot, grannie?"

"Him, him—Anerew. Yer father, laddie. I think my hert 'll brak'."

"Lea' him oot o' what grannie? I dinna unnerstan' ye."

"Lea' him oot o' oor prayers, laddie, and I canna bide it."

"What for that?"

"He's deid."

"Are ye sure?"

"Ay, ower sure."

"Weel, I dinna believe 't."

"What for that?"

"'Cause I winna believe 't. I'm no bund to believe 't, am I?"

"What's the gude o' that? What for no believe 't? Dr. Anderson's sent hame word o' 't to John Lammie. Och hone! och hone!"

"I tell ye I winna believe 't, grannie, 'cep God himsel' tells me. As

lang 's I dinna believe 'at he's deid, I can keep him i' my prayers? I'm no gaein' to lea' him oot, I tell ye, grannie."

"Well, laddie, I canna argue wi' ye. I hae nae hert till 't. I doobt I maun greit. Come awa'."

And she took him by the hand, and rose.

"Sneck the door, laddie."

Robert bolted the door, and his grandmother led him to the corner for prayer, and they knelt down together, and the old woman's prayer was one great and bitter cry for submission to the divine will. She rose from her knees somewhat comforted, saying:

"Ye maun pray yer lane, laddie. But oh be a guid lad, for ye're a' that I hae left; and gin ye gang wrang tu, ye'll bring doon my gray hairs wi' sorrow to the grave. They're gray eneuch, and they're near eneuch to the grave, but gin ye turn oot weel, I'll maybe haud up my heid a bit yet. But O Anerew! my son! my son! Would God I had died for thee!"

And the words of her brother in grief, the king of Israel, opened the floodgates of her heart, and she wept. Robert left her weeping, and closed the door as quietly as if his dead father were lying in the room.

He took his way up to his own garret, closed that door too, and sat down upon the floor.

There were no more castles to build now. It was all very well to say that he would not believe the news and would pray for his father, but he did believe them, and alas! he could not pray. His favourite employment, seated there, had been to imagine how he would grow a great man, and set out to seek his father, and find him, and stand by him, and be his son and servant. Oh! to have the man stroke his head and pat his cheek, and love him! At the one moment he would be his indignant defender, the next he would be climbing on his knee, as if he were still a little child, and laying his head on his shoulder. For he had had no fondling all his life long, and his heart yearned for it. But all was gone now. A dreary time lay before him, with nobody to please, nobody to work for, nobody to praise him. Grannie never praised him. She must have thought praise was something wicked, for she never had anything to do with it. And then, his father was in misery, for ever and ever! Only somehow that thought was not quite thinkable. It was more the vanishing of hope from his own life than a sense of his father's condition that oppressed him.

He cast his eyes, as in a kind of seeking despair, around the empty room. It was as empty as his life. There was nothing for them to rest upon but those bundles and bundles of papers on the deep shelves. What were they all about? He understood that they were business-papers of his father's. Now that he was dead, it would be no sacrilege to look at them, especially as no one seemed to care about them. Was it possible there might be some papers of his mother's amongst them? He would see at least what they were. It would be something to do in this dreariness.

Bills and receipts, and everything ephemeral, of which a man must be a poet indeed to feel the interest, was all that met his view. Bundle after bundle he tried, with no better success. But as he drew near the middle of

the shelf, upon which they lay several rows deep, he saw something dark behind, hurriedly displaced the packets in his way, and drew out a small work-box. His heart beat like that of the prince in the fairy tale when he opened the door of the Sleeping Beauty. This must have been hers at least. It was a common little thing, probably a childish possession, and kept to hold trifles worth more than they looked to be. He opened it with bated breath. The first thing he saw was a half-finished reel of thread—a *pirn*, he called it. But I need not catalogue the contents. There was a gold thimble amongst them. He lifted the tray. And then he saw a melancholy sight; a lovely face in miniature, with dark hair and blue eyes, looking earnestly upward. Those eyes had had nothing to look at but the bottom of that tray for so many years—no other eyes to look into! But that was not what made it a melancholy sight. The picture was set all round with pearls in an oval ring. How Robert knew them to be pearls he could not tell, for he did not know that he had ever seen any before, but he knew they were, and that pearls had something to do with the New Jerusalem, whither his mother was gone. But neither was this what made it a melancholy sight. It was that his mother's portrait, for such he did not doubt that it was, should be in his mother's box.

"Mother! mother!" said the poor boy, kissing the picture.

Then he burst out crying, not so much for her as for himself, took a bit of red tape off a bundle of the papers, put it through the eye of the setting, and hung the picture round his neck, inside his clothes—for grannie must not see it. Why should she not take that away as well as the fiddle? And he felt as if he had something now for which he had no name, but for which he had been longing for years.

Looking again in the box, he found a little bit of paper folded up, discoloured with age—it seemed a long age to Robert, though it was not so old as himself. On it was written a well-known hymn, and at the bottom of the hymn, the words: "O Lord! my heart is very sore." And Robert's treasure on his bosom was no longer the love he had been longing for, but the sadness of a woman which he could not reach to comfort. In that hour, the boy made a great stride towards manhood. Doubtless his mother's grief had been the same as grannie's—the fear that she would lose her husband for ever. The daily griefs from neglect, and from visible wrong-doing, did not occur to the boy; only the *never never more*. He looked no farther, took the portrait from his neck and replaced it with the paper, put the box back, and walled it up in solitude once more with the dusty bundles. Then he went down to his grandmother, sadder and more desolate than ever.

He found her seated in her usual place. Her New Testament, a large-print-octavo, lay unopened on the table beside her; for where within those boards could she find comfort for a grief like hers? That it was the will of God might well comfort any suffering of her own, but would it comfort Andrew? and if there was no comfort for Andrew, how was his mother to be comforted?

Yet God had given his first-born to save his brethren. How could he be better pleased with her if she dried her tears and was comforted? True,

some awful unknown force of a necessity with which God could not cope came in to explain it, but not to make God more kind, for he knew it all every time he made a man, nor man less sorrowful, for God would have his very mother forget him, or, worse still, remember him and be happy.

"Read a chapter till me, laddie," she said.

Robert opened and read till he came to the words: "I pray not for the world."

"*He* was o' the world," said the old woman; "and gin Christ wadna pray for him, what for suld I?"

Already, so soon after she knew of her son's death, had her theology begun to harden her heart. The strife which results from believing that the higher love demands the suppression of the lower is a fearful discord; the absolute love fighting against love—the house divided against itself; one moment all given up for the will of Him, the next the human tenderness rushing back in a flood. For Mrs. Falconer burst into a very agony of weeping; and from that day to the day of her death, the name of her lost son never passed her lips in the hearing of her grandson.

But in a few weeks, she was more cheerful. It is one of the mysteries of humanity that the mothers who believe that their sons are lost do regain not merely the faculty of going on with the business of life, but, in most cases, even cheerfulness. The infinite Truth, the Love of the universe, supports them beyond their consciousness, coming to them like sleep from the roots of their being, and having nothing to do with their opinions or beliefs. And hence spring those comforting subterfuges of hope to which they all fly. Not being able to trust the Father entirely, they yet say: "Who can tell what took place in their last moments? Who can tell whether God did not please to grant them saving faith at the eleventh hour?" Thus they might pass from the very gates of hell, the only place for which their life had fitted them, into the bosom of love and purity! This God could do for all: this for the son beloved of his mother perhaps he might do!

O mother's heart! truer than that under Genevan gown! if thou wouldst read with thy own large light, instead of the glimmer from the phosphorescent brains of theologians, thou mightst even be able to understand such a simple word as that of the Saviour, when, wishing his disciples to know that he had a nearer regard for them as his brethren, in holier danger than those who had not yet partaken of his light, and therefore was praying for them not merely as human beings, but as the human beings they were, he said to his Father in their hearing: "I pray not for the world, but for them,"—not for the world now, but for them—a meaningless utterance, if he never prayed for the world; a word of small meaning, if it was not his very wont and custom to pray for the world—for men as men. Lord Christ! not alone from the pains of hell, or of conscience—not from the outer darkness of self and all that is mean and poor and low, do we fly to thee; but from the anger that arises within us at the wretched words spoken in thy name, at the degradation of thee and of thy Father in the mouths of those that claim especially to have found thee, do we seek thy feet. Pray thou for them also, for they know not what they do.

CHAPTER XIII.

MARY ST. JOHN.

AFTER this, day followed day in the same calm and dull routine; for, as I have said, Robert did not care for most of the games with which his schoolfellows amused themselves, and had therefore few whom he could call in any sense companions. So he passed very little of his time out of school in any other society than that of his grandmother and Shargar, except the hours occupied by the lessons of the shoemaker; for he went on, though half-heartedly, with his endeavours to play upon Sandy's redeemed violin, and made a little progress even, as we sometimes do when we least think it. He took more and more to brooding; and as more questions presented themselves for solution, he became more anxious to arrive at the solution, and more uneasy as he failed in satisfying himself that he had arrived at it. Indeed, he thought so much at this time, that his brain, which needed quiet for the true formation of its substance, as a cooling liquefaction or an evaporating solution for the just formation of its crystals, was in danger of settling into an abnormal arrangement of the cellular deposits.

I believe that even the new-born infant is, in some of his moods, already grappling with the deepest metaphysical problems in a form infinitely too rudimental for the understanding of the grown philosopher—as far, in fact, removed from his ken on the one side, that of intelligential beginning, the germinal subjective, as his abstrusest speculations are from the final solutions of absolute entity on the other. At Robert's age the deepest questions of his coming manhood were beginning to work, but so surrounded with the yolk of common belief and the shell of accredited authority, that the embryo faith, which, in minds like his, always takes the form of doubt, could not be defined any more than its presence could be questioned. I have given a hint at the tendency of his mind already, in the fact that one of the most definite inquiries to which he had yet turned his thoughts was, whether God would have mercy upon a repentant devil. Another ordinary puzzle was—if his father were to marry again, and it should turn out after all that his mamma was not dead, and she were to come back to him, what was his father to do? But this was over now. A third was, why, when he came out of church, sunshine always made him miserable, and he felt better able to be good when it rained or snowed hard. I might mention the inquiry whether it was not possible somehow to elude the omniscience of God; but that is a common question with thoughtful children, and indicates little that is characteristic of the individual. He used also to puzzle himself about the perpetual motion; and one thing which gave him considerable distress was the fact that, in reading the *Paradise Lost*, he could not help sympathizing with Satan, and feeling—I do not say thinking—that the Almighty was pompous, scarcely reasonable, and somewhat revengeful.

He was remarkable amongst his schoolfellows for a love of fair play; so much so, that Nosy was their constant referee. Add to this that, notwithstanding his sympathy with Satan, he almost invariably sided with the master,

and even when unjustly punished himself, which could only happen from an occasional backwardness in self-defence, never showed any resentment—a most improbable statement, I admit, but nevertheless true—and I think the rest of his character may be left to the gradual dawning of its historical manifestation.

He had long ere this discovered who the angel was that had appeared to him at the top of the stair upon that memorable night, and had likewise conjectured how the thing must have happened. But he could hardly yet say that he knew what she was like; for, except a dim glimpse of her at the window as he passed in the street, he had seen nothing of her beyond the vision of that night. During the whole winter she scarcely left the house, partly from the state of her own health, affected by the sudden change to a northern climate, partly from the attention required by her aunt, to aid in nursing whom she had left the warmer south. Indeed, it was only to return the visits of a few of the *chosen* of Rothieden that she ever crossed the threshold; and those visits were paid at a time when all such half-grown inhabitants as Robert were gathered under the somewhat leathery wing of Mr. Innes.

But long before the winter was over, Rothieden had discovered that the stranger, the English lady, Mary St. John, outlandish, almost heathenish, as her lovely name sounded in its ears, had a power as altogether strange and new as her name. For she was not only an admirable performer on the pianoforte, but such a simple enthusiast in music, that the man must have been almost without heart who could listen to her playing without recognizing an influence on his deepest nature.

Occasionally there would be quite a little crowd gathered at night around the window of Mrs. Forsyth's drawing-room, which looked upon the street, listening to music such as had never before been heard in Rothieden. More than once, when Robert had not found Sandy Elshender at home on the lesson-night, and had gone to seek him, he had discovered him lying in wait, like a fowler, to catch the sweet sounds that flew from the opened cage of her instrument. He leaned against the wall with his cheek laid over the edge, as near the window as he dared to go, his rough face, gnarled and blotched, and hirsute with the stubble of neglected beard—his whole ursine face transfigured by the passage of the sweet sounds through his chaotic brain, which they swept like the wind of God, when of old it moved on the face of the waters that clothed the void and formless world.

"Haud yer tongue!" he would say, in a hoarse whisper, when Robert sought to attract his attention; "haud yer tongue, man, and hearken. Gin yon bonny ledly 'at yer grannie keeps lockit up i' the aumry war to tak' to the piano, that's jist hoo she wad play. Lord, man! pit yer sowl i' yer lugs, an' hearken."

The souter was all wrong in this; for if old Mr. Falconer's violin had taken shape, it would have been that of a slight, worn, swarthy creature, with wild black eyes, great and restless, a voice like a bird's, and thin fingers that clawed the music out of the wires like the quills of the old harpsichord; not that of Mary St. John, who was tall, and could not help being stately, was large and well-fashioned, as full of repose as Handel's music, with a contralto

voice to make you weep, and eyes that would have seemed, but for their shyness, to be always ready to fold you in their lucid gray depths.

Robert stared at the soutar, doubting at first whether he had not been drinking. But the intoxication of music produces such a different expression from that of drink, that Robert saw at once that if he had indeed been drinking, at least the music had got above the drink. As long as the playing went on, Elshender was not to be moved from the window.

But to many of the people of Rothieden the music did not recommend the musician; for every sort of music, except the most unmusical of psalm-singing, was in their minds associated with "dancing and play-acting, and ither worldly vainties and abominations." And Robert, being as yet more capable of melody than harmony, grudged to lose a lesson on Sandy's "auld wife o' a fiddle" for any amount of Miss St. John's playing.

CHAPTER XIV.

ERIC ERICSON.

ONE gusty evening—it was the very last day in March—Robert well remembered both the date and the look of the day—a bleak wind was driving up the long street of the town, and Robert was standing looking out of one of the windows in the gable room. The evening was closing into night. He hardly knew how he came to be there, but when he thought about it he found that it was play-Wednesday, that is, the half-holiday in the middle of each alternate week, and that he had been trying everything, one thing after another, though altogether they were few within his reach, to interest himself withal, but utterly in vain. He knew nothing about east winds; but not the less, the bleak March wind blowing outside being an east wind, did Robert feel as if this dreary wind of the dreary March world were passing through his soul. For such a wind has a shadow wind along with it, that blows in the minds of men. There was nothing genial, no growth in it. It killed, and killed most dogmatically. But it is an ill wind that blows nobody good. Even an east wind must bear some blessing on its ugly wings. And as Robert looked down from the gable, the wind was blowing up the street before it half-a-dozen footfaring students from one of the northern universities, on their way home at the close of the session, probably to the farm-labours of the spring.

This was a glad sight, as that of the returning storks in Denmark. Robert knew where they would put up, sought his cap, and followed them. His grandmother never objected to his going to see Miss Napier, and it was in her house that the weary men would this night find their rest.

It was not without reason that Lord Rothie had teased his hostess about refusing foot-passengers, for to such it was her invariable custom to make some civil excuse, sending Meg or Peggy to show them the way to the inn next in rank, which could not so well afford to be fastidious. More than one comical story had been the result of this law of the Boar's Head, unalterable almost as that of the Medes and Persians. To one class alone of the footfaring community did the official ice about the hearts of the three women

thaw, yielding passage to a river of hospitality and generosity ; and that was the class to which these wayfarers belonged.

Well may Scotland rejoice in her universities, which, whatever may be said against their system—I have no complaint to make—are in this divinely free : that such men as follow the plough in the spring and reap the harvest in the autumn, may, and often do, frequent their sacred precincts when the winter comes—so fierce, yet so welcome—so severe, yet so blessed—opening the doors to harder toil and poorer fare. I fear, however, that of such there will be fewer and fewer, seeing the class which supplied a portion of them has almost vanished from the country—that class which was its truest, simplest, and noblest strength—that class which at one time rendered it something far other than a ridicule to say that Scotland was pre-eminently a God-fearing nation—I mean the class of cottars.

But some who had more means than the men sprung from this lowly order, either could not, at that time, afford to travel by the expensive coaches, or could find none to accommodate them. Possibly some preferred to walk. However this may have been, the various groups which at the beginning and close of the session passed through Rothieden weary and footsore, were sure of a hearty welcome at the Boar's Head. And much it was needed. Some of these men would walk between one and two hundred miles before reaching the end of their journey.

Robert made a circuit, and fleet of foot, was in Miss Napier's parlour before the travellers made their appearance on the square. When they knocked at the door, Miss Letty herself went and opened it.

"Can ye tak' 's in, mem?" was on the lips of their spokesman, but Miss Letty had the first word.

"Come in, come in, gentlemen. This is the first o' ye, and ye're the mair welcome. It's like seein' the first o' the swallows. An' sic a day as ye hae had for yer lang traivel!" she went on, leading the way to her sister's parlour, and followed by all the students, of whom the one that came last was the most remarkable of the group—at the same time the most weary and downcast.

Miss Napier gave them a similar welcome, shaking hands with every one of them. She knew them all but the last. To him she involuntarily showed a more formal respect, partly from his appearance, and partly that she had never seen him before. The whisky-bottle was brought out, and all partook, save still the last. Miss Lizzie went to order their supper.

"Noo, gentlemen," said Miss Letty, "wad ony o' ye like to gang an' change yer hose and pit on a pair o' slippers?"

Several declined, saying they would wait till they had had their supper; the roads had been quite dry, &c., &c. One said he would, and another added that his feet were blistered.

"Hoot awa'!" exclaimed Miss Letty. "Here, Peggy!" she cried, going to the door; "tak' a pail o' het watter up to the chackit room. Jist ye gang up, Mr. Cameron, an' Peggy 'ill see to yer feet. Noo, sir, will ye gang to yer room an' mak' yersel' comfortable—jist as gin ye war at hame, for sae ye are?"

She addressed the stranger thus. He replied in a low, indifferent tone :

"No thank you ; I must be off again directly."

He was from Caithness, and talked no Scotch.

"'Deed, sir, ye'll do naething o' the kin'. Here ye s' bide, tho' I suld lock the door."

"Come, come, Eric, none o' your nonsense!" said one of his fellows. "Ye ken yer feet are sae blistered you can hardly put ane by anither. It was a' we cud du, mem, to get him along the last mile."

"That s' be my business, than," said Miss Letty.

She left the room, and returning in a few minutes, said, as a matter of course, but with authority :

"Mr. Ericson, ye maun come wi' me."

Then she hesitated a little. Was it maidenliness in the waning woman of five-and-forty? It was, I believe ; for why should a woman always remember how old she is? If ever there was a young soul in God's world, it was Letty Napier. And the young man was tall and stately as a Scandinavian chief, with a look of command, tempered with patient endurance, in his eagle face, for he was more like an eagle than any other creature. Yet in his countenance were signs of much suffering. Miss Letty, seeing this, was moved, and her heart swelled, and she grew conscious and shy, and, turning to Robert, said :

"Come up the stair wi' 's, Robert ; I may want ye."

Robert jumped to his feet. His heart had been yearning towards the stranger.

As if yielding to the inevitable, Ericson rose and followed Miss Letty. But when they had reached the room, and the door was shut behind them, and Miss Letty pointed to a chair beside which stood a little wooden tub full of hot water, saying, "Sit ye doon there, Mr. Ericson," he stood upright, all but his graciously-bowed head, and said :

"Ma'am, I must tell you that I followed the rest in here from the very stupidity of weariness. I have not a shilling in my pocket."

"God bless me!" said Miss Letty—and God did bless her—"we maun see to the feet first. What wad ye du wi' a shillin' gin ye had it? Wad ye clap ane upo' ilka blister?"

Ericson burst out laughing, and sat down on the chair pointed out to him. But still he hesitated.

"Aff wi' yer shune, sir. Duv ye think I can wash yer feet throu ben' leather?"

"But I'm ashamed. My stockings are all in holes."

"Weel, ye s' get a clean pair to put on the morn, an' I'll darn them 'at ye hae on, gin they be worth darnin', afore ye gang—an' what are ye sae camstairie (*unmanageable*) for? A body wad think ye had a clo'en fit i' thae sma' bits o' shune o' yours. I winna promise to please yer mither wi' my darnin' though."

"I have no mother to find fault with it," said Ericson.

"Weel, a sister's waur."

"I have no sister, either."

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"ROBERT FALCONER."



This was too much for Miss Letty. She could keep up the bravado of humour no longer. She fairly burst out crying. But by this time the shoes and stockings were off, and the blisters in the hot water. Miss Letty's tears dropped into the tub, and the salt in them did not hurt the feet with which she busied herself more than was necessary to hide them.

But no sooner had she recovered herself than she resumed her former tone.

"A shillin' said ye! An' a' thae greedy gleds o' professors to pay, that live upo' the verra blude and banes o' sair-vroucht students! Hoo cud ye hae a shillin' ower? Troth, it's nae wonner ye haena ane left. An' a' the merchan's there jist leevin' upo' ye! Lord hae a care o' 's! sic bonnie feet!—wi' blisters I mean. I never saw sic a sicht o' raw puddin's in my life. Ye're no fit to come doon the stair again."

All the time she was tenderly washing and bathing the weary feet. When she had dressed them and tied them up, she took the tub of water and carried it away, but turned at the door.

"Ye'll jist mak' up yer min' to bide a twa three days," she said; "for thae feet cudna bide to be carried, no to say to carry a weicht like you. There's naeboddy to luik for ye, ye ken. An' ye're no to come doon the night. I'll sen' up yer supper. And Robert there 'll bide and keep ye company."

She vanished; and a moment after, Peggy appeared with a *salamander*—that is a huge poker, ending not in a point, but a red-hot ace of spades—which she thrust between the bars of the grate, into the heart of a nest of brushwood. Presently a cheerful fire illuminated the room.

Ericson was seated on one chair, with his feet on another, his head sunk on his bosom, and his eyes thinking. There was something about him almost as powerfully attractive to Robert as it had been to Miss Letty. So he sat gazing at him, and longing for a chance of doing something for him. He had reverence already, and some love, but he had never felt at all as he felt towards this man. Nor was it as the Chinese puzzlers, called Scotch metaphysicians, might have represented it—a combination of love and reverence. It was the recognition of the eternal brotherhood between him and one nobler than himself—hence a lovely eager worship.

Seeing Ericson look about him, as if he wanted something, Robert started to his feet.

"Is there anything ye want, Mr. Ericson?" he said, with service standing in his eyes.

"A small bundle I think I brought up with me," replied the youth.

It was not there. Robert rushed down stairs, and returned with it—a night shirt and a hair-brush or so, tied up in a blue cotton handkerchief. That was all that Robert was able to do for him that evening.

He went home and dreamed about him. He called at the Boar's Head before going to school, but Ericson was not up. When he called again as soon as the morning school was over, he found that they had persuaded him to keep his bed, but Miss Letty took him up to his room. He looked better, seemed pleased to see Robert, and spoke to him kindly. Twice more did Robert call to inquire after him that day, and once more he saw him, for he took his tea up to him.

The next day Ericson was much better, received Robert with a smile, and went out with him for a little stroll, for all his companions were gone, and of some students who had arrived since he did not know any. Robert took him to his grandmother, who received him with stately kindness. Then they went out again, and passed the windows of his father's old house. Mary St. John was playing. They stood for a moment, almost involuntarily, to listen. She ceased.

"That's the music of the spheres," said Ericson, enthusiastically, as they moved on.

"Will you tell me what that means?" asked Robert. "I've come upon 't ower and ower in Milton."

Thereupon Ericson explained to him what Pythagoras had taught about the stars moving in their great orbits with sounds of awful harmony, too grandly loud for the human organ to vibrate in response to their music—hence unheard of men. And Ericson spoke as if he believed it. But after he had spoken, his face grew sadder than ever; and, as if to change the subject, he said, abruptly,—

"What a fine old lady your grandmother is, Robert!"

"Is she?" said Robert.

"I don't mean to say she's like Miss Letty," said Ericson. "She's an angel."

"Do you think, Mr. Ericson," said Robert, taking up the old question that still floated unanswered in his mind, "do you think if a devil was to repent, God would forgive him?"

Ericson turned and looked at him. Their eyes met full. The youth was looking surprised at the boy. He had recognized in him a younger brother, one who had begun to ask the same kind of questions, calling them out into what had as yet seemed to Ericson only the deaf and dumb abyss of the universe.

"If God was as good as I would like him to be, the devils themselves would repent before all was over, I think," he said, turning away.

Then he turned again to Robert, and looking down upon him, like a sorrowful eagle from a crag over its *barried* nest, said:

"If I only knew that God was as good as that woman, I should be content."

Robert seemed to hear the words of blasphemy from the mouth of an angel.

"But he is good, you know."

"Oh, yes. They *say* so. And then they tell you something about him that isn't good, and go on calling him good all the same. But calling any-body good doesn't make him good."

"Then you don't believe that God is good?"

"I didn't say that, my boy. But to know that God was good, and fair, and kind—heartily, I mean, not half-ways, and with *ifs* and *buts*—my boy, there would be nothing left to be miserable about."

In a momentary flash of thought, Robert wondered whether this might not be his old friend, the repentant angel, sent to the earth as a man, that he

might have a share in the redemption, and work out his own salvation. And the many thoughts about God that had hitherto been moving in formless solution in his mind began slowly to crystallize.

The next day, Eric Ericson, not without a *piece in ae pouch* and money in another, took his way home, if home it could be called where neither father, mother, brother, nor sister awaited his return. And for a season, Robert saw him no more.

As often as his name was mentioned, Miss Letty's eyes would grow hazy, and she invariably made some comical remark.

"Puir fallow!" she would say, "he was ower lang-leggit for this warld."

Or again:

"Ay, he was a braw chield. But he canna live. His feet's ower sma'."

Or yet again:

"Saw ye ever sic a gowk, to mak' sic a wark about sittin' doon an' haein' his feet washed, as gin that cost a body onything!"

CHAPTER XV.

MR. LAMMIE'S FARM.

ONE of the first warm mornings in the beginning of summer, Robert woke early, and lay awake, as was his custom, thinking. The sun, in all the indescribable purity of its morning light, had kindled a spot of brilliance just about where his grannie's head must be lying asleep in its sad thoughts, on the opposite side of the partition.

And he lay looking at the light. Then there came a gentle tapping at his window. A long streamer of honeysuckle, not yet in blossom, but alive with the life of the summer, was blown by the air of the morning against his window-pane, as if calling him to get up and look out. He did get up and look out.

But he started back in such haste that he fell against the side of his bed. Within a few yards of his window, the loveliest face he had ever seen—the only face, in fact, he had ever yet felt to be beautiful—was bending over a bush. For the window looked directly into the garden of the next house. It was its honeysuckle that tapped at his window, and its sweet-peas grew against the window-sill. He could just recognize the face of the angel of that night; but how different when illuminated by the morning sun from then, when lighted up by a chamber-candle! The first thought that came to him was the ludicrous-fantastic idea of the shoemaker about his grandfather's violin being a woman. A vaguest dream-vision of her having escaped from his grandmother's *aumry*, and wandering free amidst the wind and among the flowers, crossed his mind before he had recovered sufficiently from his surprise to prevent fancy from cutting out any more of those too ridiculous capers which she does at will in sleep, and as often besides as she can get away from the spectacles of old Grannie Judgment.

But the music of her revelation was not that of the violin. Robert did not, however, pursue the search for a fitting instrument to represent her. If he had heard the organ indeed—but he knew no instrument save the violin.

For a few moments her face brooded over the bush, and her long finely-modelled fingers travelled about it as if they were creating a flower upon it—probably they were only assisting the birth or blowing of some beauty—and then she rose up with a lingering look, and vanished from the field of the window towards the house.

But ever after this, when the evening grew dark, Robert would steal out of the house, leaving his book open by his grannie's lamp, that its patient expansion might seem to say, "He will return presently," and dart round the corner with quick quiet step, to hear if Miss St. John was playing. If she was not, he would return to the Sabbath stillness of the parlour where his grandmother sat meditating or reading, and Shargar brooding over the freedom of the old days ere Mrs. Falconer had begun to reclaim him. There he would seat himself once more at his book, to rise again before another hour had gone by, and hearken yet again at her window whether the stream might not be flowing now. If he found her at her instrument he would listen in earnest delight, until the fear of being missed drove him in, lest this secret too should be discovered, and this enchantress too sent, by the decree of his grandmother, into the limbo of vanities. Thus strangely did his evening life oscillate between the too-peaceful negations of grannie's parlour, and the vital gladness of the unknown lady's window. And skilfully did he manage his retreats and returns, curtailing his absences with such moderation that, for a long time, they awoke no suspicion in the mind of his grandmother.

I suspect myself that the old lady thought he had gone to his prayers in the garret. And I believe she thought that he was praying for his dead father; with which most papistical, and, therefore, most unchristian observance, she yet dared not interfere, because she expected Robert to defend himself triumphantly with the simple assertion that he did not believe he was dead. Possibly, the mother was not sorry that the poor soul of her son was prayed for, in case he might be alive after all, though she could no longer do so herself—not merely *dared not*, but persuaded herself that she *would not*. But Robert was convinced enough, and hopeless enough, by this time, and had even less temptation to break the twentieth commandment by praying for the dead, than his grandmother had; for with all his imaginative outgoings after his father, his love to him was as yet, compared to that father's mother's, "as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine."

Shargar would glance up at him with a queer look, drop his head over his book again, look busy and miserable, and then all would glide on as before.

When the first really summer weather came, Mr. Lamie paid Mrs. Falconer a second visit. He had not been able to get over the remembrance of the desolation in which he had left her. But he could do nothing for her, he thought, till it was warm weather. He was accompanied by his daughter, a woman verging towards middle age, bulky and uncouth, but as full of tenderness as her large frame could hold. After much and, for a long time, unavailing persuasion, they at last thought they had prevailed upon her to pay them a visit for a fortnight. But she had only retreated within another of her defences.

"I canna leave thae twa laddies alane. They wad be up to a' mischief."

"There's Betty to luik efter them," suggested Miss Lammie.

"Betty!" returned Mrs. Falconer, with scorn. "Betty's naething but a bairn hersel'—muckler and waur faured (*worse favoured*)."

"But what for shouldna ye fess the lads wi' ye?" suggested Mr. Lammie.

"I hae no richt to burden you wi' them."

"Weel, I hae aften wonnert what gart ye burden yersel' wi' that Shargar, as I understan' they ca' him."

"It's jist a bit o' greed upo' my pairt," returned the old lady, with the nearest approach to a smile that had showed itself upon her face since Mr. Lammie's last visit.

"I dinna understan' that," said Miss Lammie.

"Weel, ye see, I'm so sure o' haein' 't back again."

"Hoo's that? His father winna con ye ony thanks for haudin' him in life."

"He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, ye ken, Miss Lammie."

"Atweel, gin ye like to lippen to that bank, nae doubt ae way or anither it 'll gang to yer accoot," said Miss Lammie.

"It wad ill become us, ony gait," said her father, "nae to gie him shelter for your sake, Mrs. Faukner, no to mention ither names, sin' it's yer will to mak' the puir lad ane o' the faimily.—They say his ain mither ran awa' and left him."

"'Deed did she."

"Can ye mak' onything o' him?"

"He's quaiet eneuch. And Robert says he does nae that ill at the schule."

"Weel, jist fess him wi' ye. We'll get some place or ither to put him intil, gin it suld be a shak' doon upo' the flure."

"Na, na. What's to be dune wi' the schulin'?"

"They can gang i' the mornin', an' get their dinner wi' Betty here; and syne come hame to their fower-hours (*tea*) whan the schule's ower i' the efternune.—Ye maun jist come for the sake o' the auld frien'ship atween the faimilies."

"Weel, gin it maun be sae, it maun be sae," said Mrs. Falconer, with a sigh.

She had not left her own house for a single night for ten years. Nor is it likely she would have yielded, for immovableness was one of the most marked of her characteristics, had she not been considerably broken by mental suffering, so that, for the time, she did not care much about anything, especially herself.

Innumerable were the directions as to propriety of behaviour which she gave the boys in prospect of this visit. The probability being that they would behave as well there as at home, these directions were considerably unnecessary, for Mrs. Falconer was a strict enforcer of all social rules. Scarcely less unnecessary were the directions she gave Betty as to her conduct, who received them all in erect submission, with her hands under her apron. She ought to have been a young girl instead of an elderly woman, to judge from the way her mistress spoke to her. It proved at least her own belief in the description she had given of her to Miss Lammie.

"Noo, Betty, ye maun be dooce. An' dinna stan' at the door i' the gloamin'. An' dinna stan' claikin' an' jawin' wi' the ither lasses whan ye gang to the wall for watter. An' whan ye gang intil a chop, dinna hae them sayin' ahint yer back, as sune's ye're oot again, 'She's her ain mistress by way o', or sic like. An' min' ye hae worship wi' yersel', whan I'm nae here to hae 't wi' ye. Ye can come benn to the parlour gin ye like. An' there's my muckle Testament. And dinna gie the lads a' thing they want. Gie them plenty to ait, but no ower muckle. Fowk suld aye lea' aff wi' an eppiteet."

Mr. Lammie brought his gig to take Mrs. Falconer away to Bodyfauld, while the boys were at morning school. When they returned to dinner, they were 'aware of a freedom which Robert at least had never imagined before. But he could not know what a relief it was to Shargar to eat without the awfully calm eyes of Mrs. Falconer watching, as it seemed to him, the progress of every mouthful down that capacious throat of his. The old lady would have been shocked to learn how the ill-mothered imagination of the lad interpreted her care over him, but she would not have been surprised to know that they looked merry in her absence. She knew herself that, in some of her own moods, it would be a relief to think that that awful eye of God was not upon her. But the time was coming when her grandson, who felt the relief of her absence, would know that for the eye of his God to turn away from him for one moment would be the horror of the outer darkness.

Merriment, however, was not in Robert's thoughts. Still less was mischief. For that, whatever his grandmother might think, he had no capacity. The world was already too serious, and was soon to be too beautiful for mischief. After that, it would be too sad, and then, finally, until death, too solemn glad. The moment he heard of his grandmother's intended visit, one wild hope and desire and intent had arisen within him.

When Betty came to the parlour-door to lay the cloth for their dinner, she found it locked.

"Open the door!" she cried, but cried in vain. From impatience she passed to passion; but it was of no avail: there came no more response than from the shrine of the deaf Baal. For to the boys it was an opportunity not to be lost, at any minor risk, though dull Betty never suspected what they were about. They were ranging the place like two tiger-cats whose whelps had been carried off in their absence—questing, with nose to earth and tail in air, for the scent of their enemy. My simile has carried me too far: it was only a dead old gentleman's violin that a couple of boys was after—but with what eagerness, and, on the part of Robert, what alternations of hope and fear! And Shargar was always the reflex of Robert, so far as Shargar could reflect Robert. Sometimes Robert would stop, stand still in the middle of the room, cast a mathematical glance of survey over its cubic contents, and then dart off in another inwardly suggested direction of search. At last, when hope was growing dim, after an hour and a half of vain endeavour, a scream of utter discordance from Shargar announced the discovery of the mother of harmony. Taught by his experience of his

wild mother's habits to guess at those of *douce* Mrs. Falconer, he found the instrument at the foot of her bed, between the feathers and the mattress. For that happy moment Shargar was the benefactor, and Robert the grateful receiver of benefits. Nor, I do believe, was this strand of the cable that bound them ever forgotten—broken it could not be.

Robert drew out the recovered treasure, opened the case with trembling eagerness, and was stooping over it, with one hand on its neck and the other on the bow, when Shargar stopped him.

His success had given him such dignity that for once he dared to act from himself.

"Betty 'ill hear ye," he said.

"What care I for Betty? I can manage her."

"But wadna 't be better 'at she didna ken?"

"She sure to fin' oot whan she mak's the bed."

"Deil a bit o' her s' be a hair wiser! Ye dinna play tunes on the boxie, man."

Robert caught the idea at once. He lifted "the bonny leddy" from her coffin, and while he was absorbed in looking her all over, Shargar managed to throw Boston's *Four-fold State*, the torment of his life on the Sunday evenings he spent with Mrs. Falconer, into the case, which he then buried cautiously, with the feather-bed for mould and sod over it. He took care, however, not to let Robert know what he had buried in it, because he knew Robert could not tell a lie.

Robert hid the violin better than his grannie had done, notwithstanding that it was a more delicate operation, seeing it had lost its shell. But it cost him some trouble to fix on a suitable place. First he put it into the well of the clock-case, but instantly bethought him what the awful consequence would be if one of the weights should fall from the gradual decay of its cord. He had heard of such a thing happening. Then he would put it into his own place of dreams and meditations. But what if Betty should take a fancy to change her bed? or some friend of his grannie's should come to spend the night? How would "the bonny leddy" like it? or how would she be treated? Under the bed, the mice could get at her strings—nay, perhaps gnaw a hole right through her beautiful body. On the top of the clock, the brass eagle with outspread wings might scratch her as he put her up. So at last he wrapped her in a piece of paper, and placed her on the top of the chintz tester of his bed, where there was just room between it and the ceiling. That would do till he could carry her away to some better retreat. He dreaded putting her in the power of the shoemaker again after what had happened. In the meantime, however, she was safe, and the boy was the blesseddest boy in creation.

These things done, they were just in the humour to have a lark with Betty. So they unbolted the door, rang the bell, and when Betty appeared, red-faced and wrathful, asked her very gravely and politely whether they were not going to have some dinner before they went back to school, as there was now only twenty minutes left to eat it in. Betty was so *dumfounded* with their impudence that she could not say a word. She made haste with the dinner,

and showed her indignation only in the way she put the things on the table. As the boys left her, Robert contented himself with the single hint:

"Betty, Bodyfauld's i' the perris o' Kettledrum. Min' ye that."

Betty glowered and said nothing.

But the delight of the walk of three miles over hill and dale and moor and farm to Mr. Lammie's! The boys, if not as wild as colts—that is, as wild as most boys would have been—were at least greatly excited. That first summer walk, with a goal before them, in all the freshness of the perfecting year, was something which to remember in after days was to Falconer nothing short of ecstasy. The westerling sun threw long shadows before them as they trudged away eastward, lightly laden with those books only that were necessary for the preparation of to-morrow's lessons. Once beyond the immediate purlieus of the town and the various plots of land occupied by its inhabitants, they crossed a small river and entered upon a region of little hills, some covered with larch and other trees to the top, others cultivated, and some bearing only heather, waiting to burst into a purple flame in the autumn. Between these the road wound, now swampy and worn into deep ruts, now sandy and broken with large stones. Down to its edge would come the dwarfed oak, or the mountain ash, or the silver birch, single and small, but lovely and fresh; and now green fields, fenced with walls of earth as green as themselves, or of stones overgrown with moss, would stretch away on both sides, sprinkled with busily-feeding cattle. Now they would pass through a farm-steading, perfumed with the breath of cows, and the odour of burning peat—so fragrant! though not yet so grateful to the inner sense as it would be when encountered in after years and in foreign lands. For the smell of burning and the smell of earth are the deepest underlying sensuous bonds of the earth's unity and the common brotherhood of them that dwell thereon. Now the scent of larches would come from the hill, or the wind would waft the odour of the white clover, beloved of his grandmother, to Robert's nostrils, and he would turn aside to pull her a handful. Then they clomb a high ridge, on the top of which spread a moorland, dreary and desolate, brightened by nothing save "the canna's hoary beard" waving in the wind, and making it look even more desolate from the sympathy they felt with the forsaken grass. But this they soon crossed, and coming down between young plantations of firs and rowan-trees and birches, they reached a warm house on the side of the slope, with farm-offices and ricks of corn and hay all about it, the front overgrown with roses and honeysuckle, and a white-flowering plant whose name Robert could not tell. From the open kitchen-door came the smell of something good for supper. But beyond all to Robert was the welcome of Miss Lammie, whose fat, small hand, large as she was herself, grasped his like a very love-pudding, after partaking of which even his grandmother's stately reception, followed immediately by the words "Noo be dooce," could not chill the warmth in his bosom.

Only the pen of one writer that I know would have been fit to describe the delights of the first few days at Bodyfauld—the pen of Jean Paul. Nor would he have disdained to make the gladness of a country school-boy the theme of that pen. If a boy is worth writing about for any higher purpose

than the amusement of other boys, the life of a country boy will be found richer than that of a town boy. For a man's completeness, a sense of the marvel of nature, a feeling of her femininity, is essential. I do not mean that town boys have not got this, but where it is feeble there is less chance of its surviving. As far as my experience goes, town girls and country boys love nature most. I have known town girls love her as passionately as country boys. Town boys have too many books and pictures. They see Nature in mirrors—invaluable privilege *after they know herself, not before*. They have greater opportunity of observing of *human* nature; but here also the books are too many and various. They are cleverer than country boys, but they are less profound; their observation may be quicker; their perception is less. They know better what to do on an emergency; they know worse how to order their ways. Of course, in this, as in a thousand other matters, Nature will burst out laughing in the face of the would-be philosopher, and bringing forward her town boy, will say, "Look here!" For the town boys are Nature's boys after all, at least so long as doctrines of self-preservation and ambition have not turned them from children of the kingdom into dirt-worms. But I must stop, for I am getting up to the neck in a bog of discrimination. As if I did not know the nobility of some townspeople, compared with the worldliness of some country folk! I give it up. We are all good and all bad. God mend all. Nothing will do for Jew or Gentile, Frenchman or Englishman, Negro or Circassian, town boy or country boy, but the kingdom of heaven which is within him, and must come thence to the outside of him.

To a boy like Robert the changes of every day, from country to town with the gay morning, from town to country with the sober evening—for country as Rothieden might be to Edinburgh, much more was Bodyfauld country to Rothieden—were a source of boundless delight. It was not little that instead of houses, he should behold the horizon; that instead of streets or walled gardens, he should roam over fields bathed in sunlight and wind; that he should wake where there was some use in getting up before the sun, because then one might see the sun get up. Town to country is what a ceiling is to a *cælum*.

There I am again depreciating the town, and knowing in my own pineal gland that Rothieden and not Bodyfauld was to be Robert's heaven before ten days were over! Had it not been, however, for something which I am about to relate, there would not have been in Robert's mind the room for a choice between them. To the man who is hunted over a prairie, the veriest rabbit hole looks like a refuge; to the man who is imprisoned in a dungeon, the prairie is freedom; to Robert the country farm was paradise; and yet, ere long, enclosed once more in the nutshell of Rothieden, he began to count himself a king of infinite space; for in Rothieden was his violin, and—well that is what I have to account for.

YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD.

"As the harp in the hand of a master, so is the heart of a young man beneath the touch of a maiden."—*Old Welsh Englyn.*

LIKE a drop of water is my heart,
Laid upon her soft and rosy palm,
Turned whichever way her hand doth turn,
Trembling in an ecstasy of calm.

Like a broken rose-leaf is my heart,
Held within her close and burning clasp,
Breathing only dying sweetness out,
Withering beneath the fatal grasp.

Like a vapoury cloudlet is my heart,
Growing into beauty near the sun,
Gaining rainbow hues in her embrace,
Melting into tears when it is done.

Like mine own dear harp, is this my heart,
Dumb, without the hand that sweeps its strings;
Though the hand be careless or be cruel,
When it comes, my heart breaks forth and sings.

S. A. D. I.

RUBENS IN ITALY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CITOYENNE JAQUELINE," &c.

NOT the least act of kindness which chivalrous, ungrudging Otto Vennius did his cherished pupil Peter Paul Rubens, was to encourage and promote the young man's desire to travel in Italy. For this purpose Otto presented him to the munificent and friendly Archduke and his Infanta, and applied to them on his behalf for letters of recommendation to foreign courts. Thus in May, 1600, while yet in his twenty-third year, but already as wonderfully skilled in art as many a grey beard, the handsome, winning stripling—able, manly, and confident—took his longed-for journey into Italy. His first bourne was Venice—the Art metropolis of Flemish artists. Not without a dark brush with Fate did Peter Paul make this propitious beginning, for in the same year his eldest brother, John Baptist, who in some respects had stood in the relation of father to him, died at the early age of thirty-eight.

At Venice, not only the apostles but the heathen proselytes of painting were no more. But life, if a little rude, was very rich, in the young Fleming, and he revelled in the golden lights both of nature and art. The man who had such an eye for the general effect of the picturesque seized on the massiveness of hall and church and prison alike, and gloated over the hectic gorgeousness which decay was already lending to the works of the old proud

state. He troubled himself no more with the fall of peoples and republics than with the flashing waves of the Adriatic. Nay, he might even have indulged in careless, bold, Epicurean gratifications, conscious that all alike would ultimately serve to assist his sweeping pencil.

At Venice, Peter Paul was most struck by the paintings of Titian, Tintoretto, and Paul Veronese. From these the chosen pupil of Otto Vennius by sheer sympathy rapidly imbibed the great lessons in perspective and chiaroscuro, and the radiance of light, and the splendour of colour, which, combining with his other attainments, rendered him the king of Antwerp painters. "The little dyer," who, for the sake of practice, executed every commission, though the price would sometimes hardly pay for his colours, and who posted above his door the audacious assertion that here was to be found the drawing of Michael Angelo with the colouring of Titian, possessed a good deal in common with the frank, loud, self-reliant, yet sweet-tempered Peter Paul. So had the magnificent, dauntless, dashing Veronese, and they instructed him (by their works) not only in their wealth of colouring, but in the broad, free handling which enabled him to finish by a few master touches the most difficult and divine of themes. To Cross, Passion, Martyr, and God-man, Rubens brought soon and late the fire and zeal of his ardent, soaring nature. As for that prostration, humility, and reverence of patient, fond labour which characterized the Fra Angelicos and Van Eyks, they were no more his than was the large contemplative soul of a Shakspeare or a Raphaël.

On his first visit to Venice the goodly young Fleming, who was much more graceful and courtly by natural inheritance than Flemings are apt to be imagined, was lodged in the same house with a gentleman from Mantua. The Mantuan taking a fancy to the brilliant, pleasant lad and his pictures, as everybody did through life (even after they had become somewhat distorted by the corruption of prosperity), remembered and spoke of him kindly, when he had the opportunity, to his master Vincent de Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, who having seen the letters from the Archduke and the Archduchess vouching for the gentle nurture and the good parts of the youthful artist, appointed him gentleman of the chamber and court painter at Mantua, and attached him to his service by an engagement which lasted seven years.

Seven years in that crowning Italy—the school of painters! Mantua, with its piazzas and duomos, its fertile plains, and memories of Virgil and Livy, would of itself have been dear to the enthusiastic Peter Paul, who pleasantly surprised the Grand Duke by reciting Virgil *con amore* as he made despatch with his painting. Besides, Mantua at this time was rich in art treasures. Two great painters had already entered the Mantuan Grand Duke's service, and ended their days, after amassing great wealth and honour, at Mantua. One of these was Andrea Mantegna, the brother-in-law of Bellini, the stately statuesque painter whom Ariosto placed in rank between Leonardo da Vinci and Gian Bellini, and whose frieze of the Triumph of Julius Cæsar, then hanging on the hall of San Sebastiano, Rubens admired so exceedingly that he made a version of his own from it. The other was Giulio de Romano, the pupil and friend of Raphael, whose lush extravagance of Jupiter vanquishing the Titans, and the story of Psyche in the Pelazzo del Te, and whose

personal character, with its generous arrogance and prodigality, were after Peter Paul's own heart.

It is more than likely that it was while the young man was residing at Mantua, and deeply imbued with the Greek taste of Mantegna and the coarser gods and goddesses, fawns and satyrs, of Giulio Romano, that he designed and executed many of the subjects from the old mythology, in which his susceptibility, fervour, and grand dramatic power, had fitter development than in themes which bore on divine wants and divine relations.

The "Castor and Pollux" is full of power. Two muscular men are carrying off the Flemish moulded daughters of Leucippus, the one heavenly twin assisting the other with his right hand, while with the left he grasps for himself the sister damsel, "full of panting life." Then there is "The Rape of Proserpine." Pluto is in his car bearing away the goddess—resisting and struggling: her terrified companions, Diana among them, is arrested by the outrage, while mocking Cupid is leading on the rough wooer; the blue sea kissed by the golden sunbeams in the background. Another is "The Apotheosis or Translation of Hercules," who stands in his chariot, leaning on his club, while genii hold a wreath of laurel over his head, and guide his horses through the air. Behind him rise the flames of his funeral pile. Others, certainly done in Italy, are "Prometheus with the fire stolen from Olympus;" "Perseus delivering Andromeda;" "Orpheus rescuing Eurydice;" and the "Apollo and Daphne." And perhaps, too, it was with Giulio Romano's copy of Raphael's "Battle between Constantine and Maxentius," directly appealing to his youthful ambition, that he made the study for his "Battle of the Amazons," if indeed he had already sufficiently matured capabilities for this his masterpiece in dramatic art. This picture is now in Munich, and is certainly a great and effective work. The warrior women are being driven back by the Greeks over the river Ghermodore. Two horses are in fiery combat on the bridge; one Amazon is torn from her horse, while another is being dragged along by her furious charger; maddened women and victorious men are locked in one deadly embrace, and singly falling headlong into the roaring stream, where they swim and still battle fiercely for dear life. Only two other fights on canvas can approach it, and these are "The Battle of Constantine and Maxentius," and Leonardo's "Battle of the Standard," which, by the by, existed only in a cartoon, of which a fragment (copied and thus preserved by the indefatigable artist) remained in Rubens' day.

Judging from the heroic bent of his early manhood, it is likely too that it was during his seven years in Italy that Peter Paul planned, if he waited for the aid of other hands to execute, many of his scriptural and legendary pictures, such as "The Destruction of Sennacherib;" "Samson overpowered by the Philistines;" "The Resurrection of Lazarus;" and the "Conversion of St. Paul," which is full of power and broad effect of light. The horse has fallen on its knees, and Saul, dazzled by the vision, is prostrate on the ground, his manly features pale with conviction and terror. In a stream of light above him stands the figure of the Lord, while the followers of the Jew are in panic, and their horses are rearing and snorting as only the horses of Rubens could rear and snort. Altogether this is one of the most difficult subjects a

painter could choose; yet Rubens, in the primitive bent of his nature, was not without a resemblance to the bold, impulsive, warm-hearted Apostle Peter, whose name he bore; while along with that he had also something of the greater St. Paul, whose blundering love the good Lord claimed for his own service.

Another notable group are "St. Ignatius casting out Devils;" "St. Francis raising the dead and healing the sick;" and "St. Francis receiving the Communion." It is of course well known that some of these pictures were finally worked out at Antwerp on commission from churches there; but as they bear manifest tokens of Italian influence, and are indubitably connected with the early days of Rubens' return to his native land, their origin seems to belong by right to this period of the painter's history.

Again, and with still more assurance, Italy was the spring and source of the inspiration of his dramatic landscapes, and Peter Paul was wonderful in these. Titian alone, of all who preceded him, had any pretension to his "broad, free, energetic, portrait-like, pastoral, dramatic, or fantastic" character. Certainly it was not in the flat country between Mechlin and Brussels, cloud-swept though it was, nor in the *Prairie de Lacken*, with its peaceful fruitfulness, fresh with the dew of the morning or trembling under the heavier moisture of a thunder-shower, crowned by rainbow, and lit up by sunset or moonrise, but in Italy, slumbering over volcano fires, and with a brooding passion more universal and abiding in its loveliest landscapes than in its people, that Peter Paul took his chief pleasure. That this is true is seen in such pictures as "*Philemon and Baucis*," standing on a wooded hill in security, while Jupiter hurls down flaming thunderbolts and foaming torrents on the inhospitable villagers; in "*The Wreck of Eneas*;" and in "*Ulysses cast on the Beach*." And surely, familiarity with a life that had so much of an idyllic tone—when cavaliers and court ladies grouped themselves on mossy banks, under the shade of spreading trees, and told and heard the stories of Boccaccio, or played the airs from the oldest of Italian operas—must have had a subtle charm and a fascinating attraction for Rubens.

To illustrations of Venetian tales like these is, in fact, due at once the first of his conversational pieces and the last—that "*Garden of Love*,"—painted by Rubens when he was nearly sixty years old, which shows how fresh in the evergreen heart was still the remembrance of the gay and gallant life in the court of Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. In that picture, bathed as it is in glad and graceful light, Rubens has reflected a tender experience. Loving couples stray among blossoming roses and orange trees; Cupids hide, sheltered in tender women's laps, or whisper with welcome voices in the ears of buxom girls; and Rubens himself and his second doted-on girl, his wife, and his friend and scholar, Vandyke, are among the company. If ever the thought of Boccaccio and Italy was presented to the susceptible man, they must have been in the picture which has received the local name of "*The Dutch Venus's Court of Pleasure*."

In 1605, when Rubens was twenty-eight years of age, another and distinct phase of his busy and spirited life was heralded by the trust confided to him by the Duke of Mantua, who sent him to Spain—ostensibly to convey to

Philip III. the gift of a state carriage and six horses, but in reality on a diplomatic mission. Rubens, now first seen on the stage as an ambassador, was peculiarly suited to the office both by gifts and acquirements. Such great natural clearness and readiness of perception as his are but seldom combined with such promptness of action, with such art, humour, self-restraint, and sweet pliability. And then, his personal beauty, his brilliant and suave address, and his early acquaintance with society and thoroughly gentlemanlike training were all valuable elements; and it is not too much to say that he was at once dignified, open, and winning. All these things, combined with his knowledge of languages and his aptitude for them, all pointed him out as a very jewel of an ambassador in the days when painters and poets served the turn of princes in this line as well as in others. There was only one signal objection to the Duke of Mantua's patronage and to more patronage of the same kind. It took Rubens from his true calling; and while it might serve to mature his luxurious tastes, it robbed the world of hundreds of those matchless pictures of which, as it was, Peter Paul and his scholars accomplished one thousand three hundred.

There is an obscurity about this first visit of Rubens to Spain, and it has been confounded in some respects with other and later visits. But it is certain that the young man went in a simpler guise (perhaps as the envoy of a duke) than he did in later years as the renowned and proud painter, the report of whose sumpter-train sent terror into the heart of a niggardly king. Yet very intense must have been Rubens' enjoyment at his introduction to the land of evergreen oaks and fragrant orange trees; of splashing fountains in eastern courts, and tinkling serenades under southern skies; of haughty hidalgos, languishing donnas, and prying duenos; of relics of generous Moorish chivalry. The mother country of the rulers of Antwerp, with churches and monasteries like beehives, and the swarming monks and friars like drones in the frost-bitten, sun-scorched pastures of the Sierra Morena, offered broad contrasts to the Garden of Granada, and the luscious stores of the market of Madrid; and the castanets of the dancing girls to the vermin of the beggars.

Peter Paul remained long enough to paint several portraits—among them that of Elizabeth of Bourbon, the future queen of Philip IV., and the eldest daughter of Marie de Medici. He also won the friendship of the court painter of Spain himself—too honest-hearted to mind rivals. Murillo was so young that he could not have done more than draw a sheep or a mule, for water-carriers and flower-girls were still far in the distance for him. But it may have been that Peter Paul passed on the Prado the gaunt sagacious face of a man who had been a common soldier in the wars, and whose smoke-seasoned brains marshalled ten times merrier and sadder shapes than the rampant Fleming dashed in with all his mastery! And he may have been overtaken by panting, puffing, outrageous, industrious Lopez de Vega—more prolific as an author than Peter Paul as a painter, since while the latter accomplished, with much help, a great painting in a week, Lopez wrote by himself a readable, acting, sometimes genuinely original and valuable, play in a day.

It was after Peter Paul's return to Mantua, on the successful execution of

his business in Spain, that he persuaded the Duke of Mantua to send him to Rome to copy the works of the great masters and study there. Neither the dates nor the details of his journey, however, are precise and definite. Imperial Rome, in its melancholy Campagna—Rome, with its Duomo in the air, its Disputa on the walls of the Vatican—had surpassing attractions for the scholar and artist. Rubens made at least two visits, with a short interval between, to the Eternal City, and resided some time there on both occasions. On his second visit he had the companionship of his accomplished brother and dear friend Philip, who had come to Rome to finish his course of study in Roman law, and who was able to aid him not a little in his classic researches. The result of the pleasant association was the subsequent writing, drawing, and publishing of a joint work by the gifted and attached pair, a book on the antiquities of Rome, to which Philip furnished the letterpress, while Peter Paul supplied sketches for six copperplate engravings.

At Rome it was not so much the spirituality and subtlety of Raphael which held Peter Paul entranced, as the grand drawing of Michael Angelo; and again, the bold license of Giulio Romano, who departed far from his master, and who was to become at once the Fleming's guiding star and his misguiding and malignant planet.

Though the Gods and the Titans of the prime of Italian art had alike passed away, and the first slept more truly canopied by their works than Raphael by his "Transfiguration," Rubens had Italian contemporaries worthy of mention.

Annibal Carracci, the chief of the sons and the nephews of the tailor of Bologna, was engaged about this time with his task of the Farnese Palace. Dominechino was in his company. Probably Guido Reni was also in Rome, and might be giving his last touches to the young face with the awful history—the face of Beatrice Cenci—for the Palazzo Barberini.

Rubens was not idle on his own account; not only did he copy assiduously, as having the grace to admire the old masters where he could not emulate them, but he composed several original works on his second visit to Rome. He painted for the Archduke Albert a "Crowning with Thorns," a "Crucifixion," and a "Finding of the Cross," and for the Pope, "The Virgin Mother, accompanied by St. Anne, adoring the infant Jesus." His style was already so decided that Guido asked of him, "Does this young man mix his colours with blood?" and his celebrity was so well established that princes and cardinals loaded him with commissions.

But Rome must have had its particular fascination for Peter Paul in details apart from those of pope and cardinal, from legends of Virgin and Saint, or even from art-tradition. No man was more deeply imbued with the taste for old Roman history, then revived in the North of Europe. It has been said of Rubens that he had much of the old Roman in him, in his love of conquest in his own field, his noble sway, the tinge of ferocity and sensuality in his nature. But the ferocity seems an uncalled-for stigma, and for the sensuality there was enough and to spare of that in the beer-swilling, swash-buckling Antwerp mechanic, refined but not extinguished in the luxurious, arrogant Antwerp burgher, without going to old Rome for its germ.

Neither sensuous, subtle, great, nor lordly brutish Roman had very much to do with the composite traits of Peter Paul; but the first had more than the last. He was fond of Roman history, as Sir Walter Scott loved Border ballads.

At Rome, with his congenial brother Philip, Rubens went near to sinking the artist in the antiquary, neglecting the width of the Campagna, lending its blue tint to the olive-brown towns and villages on its borders, that he might spend his moments hurrying with never flagging ardour from hill to hill, from Capitol to Forum, from bath to tomb, and so completing his knowledge, that he could treat the cartoons from the story of the Consul Decius Mus with more realistic facility than he could afterwards find for the pictures from the life of Marie de Medici, painted from the living subjects in a contemporary court. Indeed the one series is as remarkable for fine correctness, simplicity, and harmony, as the other is notorious for loose, florid splendour. In addition, and in the future, Peter Paul had twelve pictures from the life of the Emperor Constantine and "The Rape of the Sabines," and "The Reconciliation of the Romans and the Sabines," designed according to his own ideas, but full of Roman colouring.

Going and coming from Rome, Rubens was repeatedly at Florence, where the Greek antiques were his study, and where he painted "The Triumph of Mars," and his own fine portrait to be hung in the Gallery of Great Artists, receiving in return a chain and medallion and such favour from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, that his own Grand Duke of Mantua grew jealous of the renown of his court painter. On expeditions nearer home at Milan, Peter Paul copied Leonardo's "Last Supper" with so free a hand that the Disciples are fairly converted into heavy specimens of Flemish manhood; at Genoa his Flemish taste and national pride in architecture—the architecture of merchant princes moreover—was called forth so that he declared, with something which sounded like home sickness at last, that the climate of Genoa agreed with him better than that of any other Italian city, because it reminded him of Antwerp. He remained long enough at Genoa to paint the "Circumcision," and to place a book of engravings of the palaces of Genoa as a supplement to his travelling album, full of pen-and-ink sketches of Italian works of art, and writing in Latin, Italian, and Dutch, an unmistakable evidence that the great painter in his haste and impetuous way did not fail in unremitting concentrated application to the means of his art.



LARRY GEOGHEGAN; OR, A DRIVE WITH A DUBLIN CARMAN.

"WHERE *will* I drive your honour to?" asked a Dublin jarvey, with a truly Irish disregard of the distinction between *shall* and *will*, as we mounted his car on a bright summer morning, for an outside jaunt to the country.

"Carton," was our curt reply.

We were just passing along the wall of the beautiful Phoenix Park, which, as a royal enclosure, owns no equal in her Majesty's dominions, not only for extent, being seven miles in circumference, but also for its varied and lovely scenery, when we said, addressing our driver:—

"You turn out all in white this morning," alluding to his white horse and to the cover of his cushions, which was of spotlessly white linen, edged with a bright-red tape, a style of outfit that did credit to the taste of our Hibernian charioteer—

"You're all in white, Paddy, this morning."

"Yes, your honour, I am: for you see we must have something spicy for the gentlemen about Dublin now-a-days. But my name's not Paddy, anyhow."

"Well, what is it?" said we, somewhat taken aback by his frankness.

"Larry," replied he, "Larry Geoghegan [Gagan], but sometimes English travellers, like your honour, to whom I show it in print, or spell it, call me (for short, I suppose) Mister Laurence Ge-hod-gi-gan. In troth they make me ready to laugh my life out to hear their foolish new-fangled way of talk. 'Mr. Gehodgigan,' says one of them to me one day, 'Mr. Gehodgigan,' says he, 'how do they pronounce your name?' 'Arrah, your honour,' says I, 'don't be after axing a poor simple boy, like meself; ax one of the *pee-ho-people*, and they'll be sure to tell you right.' Well, your honour, that shut up the gomus's mouth, like a Brummagem button, and he never opened it again all the way."

I had an immediate impression that Mr. Larry meant to include a certain person to whom I need not more distinctly allude, on the opposite seat of the car to himself, under the category *gomus*, and had a salutary dread of provoking an Irish carman's vituperation. Their powers in that style of civic oratory I had understood to be something fearful, a cataclysm of malediction, a very dropsy and plethora of abuse. I was quite sure he would call me anything but a gentleman, if I provoked his ire by my strictures, so I very wisely held my tongue. But though I shut my mouth, I kept my eyes open, and was agreeably surprised with the western confines of the city. Our course lay by the Liffey; a pleasant and sparkling stream on the left, and the park to the right, on which side the ground rose above the road to the height of a hill, bordering the channel of the river. The park itself contained every variety of hill and dale, with some pleasant lakes, a chalybeate spa, the Viceregal palace, a commanding fort and powder magazine, magnificent avenues of elms three miles long, and a review ground of fifty acres, without its parallel in Europe, and of which the *Champ de Mars* in Paris is a very dwarfish imitation.

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"You're all in white, Paddy, this morning."

"Yes, your honour, I am: for you see we must have something spicy for the gentlemen about Dublin now-a-days. But my name's not Paddy, anyhow."

"Well, what is it?" said we, somewhat taken aback by his frankness.

"Larry," replied he, "Larry Geoghegan [Gagan], but sometimes English travellers, like your honour, to whom I show it in print, or spell it, call me (for short, I suppose) Mister Laurence Ge-hod-gi-gan. In troth they make me ready to laugh my life out to hear their foolish new-fangled way of talk. 'Mr. Gehodgigan,' says one of them to me one day, 'Mr. Gehodgigan,' says he, 'how do they pronounce your name?' 'Arrah, your honour,' says I, 'don't be after axing a poor simple boy, like meself; ax one of the *pee-ho-people*, and they'll be sure to tell you right.' Well, your honour, that shut up the gomus's mouth, like a Brummagem button, and he never opened it again all the way."

I had an immediate impression that Mr. Larry meant to include a certain person to whom I need not more distinctly allude, on the opposite seat of the car to himself, under the category *gomus*, and had a salutary dread of provoking an Irish carman's vituperation. Their powers in that style of civic oratory I had understood to be something fearful, a cataclysm of malediction, a very dropsy and plethora of abuse. I was quite sure he would call me anything but a gentleman, if I provoked his ire by my strictures, so I very wisely held my tongue. But though I shut my mouth, I kept my eyes open, and was agreeably surprised with the western confines of the city. Our course lay by the Liffey; a pleasant and sparkling stream on the left, and the park to the right, on which side the ground rose above the road to the height of a hill, bordering the channel of the river. The park itself contained every variety of hill and dale, with some pleasant lakes, a chalybeate spa, the Viceroyal palace, a commanding fort and powder magazine, magnificent avenues of elms three miles long, and a review ground of fifty acres, without its parallel in Europe, and of which the *Champ de Mars* in Paris is a very dwarfish imitation.

The Wellington testimonial looks down upon Dublin in massive simplicity—very conspicuous, very bare, very big—called, in fact, by the ready wit of the Dublin men, as Larry informed me, “the big mile-stone,” and as yet uncompleted with that equestrian statue which was to stand in front and crown the memorial. We reach Chapel-Izod, which, with its boundless beds of strawberries lying open to the southern sun of June, supplies the capital with this delicious fruit, and entices those persons who would eat it on the spot of its nativity forth from their grimy streets and close habitations to the pure air and appetising yield of “Liffey’s sweet bowers.” Lucan comes next, still close by the Liffey, with a considerable ridge on the right hand studded with villas, farmhouses, and all the etceteras of suburban luxury and comfort. Leixlip is eight miles from Dublin in the same direction, a romantic and enchanting scene, from the confluence of the Rye with the Liffey, the high grounds on either side, the ruins, the waterfall and salmon leap, the aqueduct some short distance away, and the splendid mansion of Castletown, with which few seats in Ireland can compare. The country henceforward, ascending from the river, becomes as flat an upland as can be seen in the steppes of Bulgaria, and it so continues into Maynooth; but at the same time it is as rich as manure, a fertile base, and good tillage can make it.

“This is Mayneuth now, and where does your honour wish to go?” asks our driver.

“Is there any book about Carton?” asked we of our Jehu, “any guide-book to be had in Maynooth? Is there not a bookseller’s shop here?”

“Sorra a one, your honour, and never was since the creation.”

“You go a pretty long way back in your denial, Larry. Very near to creation books must have been rather a scarce article—nothing beyond Primers, I should say, or mere Elements.”

“I can answer at least for thirty years back. There isn’t an inch of this said Mayneuth which I have not fussed a hundred times over, and I never saw a book in it except in the college itself. You might find a glass of the crayture in it at any time, or a pretty girl, or a father confessor, or a shillelah, or a brukken head, but you wouldn’t light upon a Reedy-my-daisy [Reading-made-easy]. The holy fathers in the college doesn’t patronise learning out of doors.”

“So it seems, Larry; and I’m sorry for it. To the Duke’s palace, then, start first of all,” added we; whereupon, with a sudden cut of his whip and jerk of his rein, Mr. Larry made his horse cognisant of his master’s will. We turned towards the entrance of an avenue on our right, trending eastward; and made application, at certain gates which barred our entrance, for admission.

“Will you open the gates at wanst, will you? Is it keeping him in the could you’d be, bad manners to you?” cried Larry, might and main; “sure the gentleman’s going to visit the Juke!”

“Hold your tongue,” says the respectable matron to our driver, “I’ll hear the gentleman himself, for you’re a great big liar, and all the sort of ye, I know it right well.”

“My good woman,” said we, to this appeal, “we are simply a stranger

visiting Maynooth, and would be glad of the privilege of driving up to his Grace's mansion, if there is no objection."

"If that's the case," said she, applying the key to the lock, "you may enter, sir, without delay;" and the gates opened for our admission at once, nothing being really more civil than the greater part of the Irish officials, and race of domestics.

* * * * *

Returning from this sweet spot and its pleasant associations—"Where next, your honour, now that you have bolted the duke, the palace, the gardens, and all? *Where next?* as the gosling said to her grandmother, when she put on her pumps for the assize ball!"

"To the College, of course; we can't think of leaving Maynooth without visiting the spot which is more talked of in Parliament, and written about in books and newspapers, than any other in her Majesty's dominions. Of course you know it perfectly well; you have often driven there?"

"Faix, and I have often done that same; but more than that, I know every stone of its pavement, for 'tis often I trod them under foot. The simminary's much altered since I was there; it was a simminary then, but 'tis a college now."

"How do you mean you were there? You cannot mean that you were ever a student in it?"

"That's the very thing I do mean, your honour, for the boy that's spaking to you now—poor Larry Geoghegan—is a SPOILT PRIEST!"

The "boy" who addressed me was from fifty to fifty-five years old, a rather ancient specimen of the class; but, as the name once given them never leaves them, it is by no means unusual amongst the lower Irish.

"How is it you failed of being a priest after all, if it is a fair question, when you got so far on the way to that office?"

"'Tis the ould story, your honour. There was myself and Dinny Fox—he called himself the Rev. Dionysius O'Fox after he was ordained—were both of us rusty-cated after our first year, he because he had an ugly trick of turning up his little finger whenever he had an opportunity of doing so, and myself because there was a Norah in the case. But, as he repinted, he was admitted again; and tuk an oath against drinking a drop of whisky again while he stayed in the simminary; but I got married to Norah, so that I was obliged to stay out for ever. Every sin could be forgiven but that. If I repinted ever so much, I could get no dispensation. But, to tell the honest truth, I never repinted at all. Like St. Peter himself, I had a vocation for the holy sacrament of matrimony, and unlike St. Peter, the niver a bit of a call had I to holy orders. Who could repint of having such a pratie-blossom as Norah blooming in the garden of his heart?"

"But how did it happen, Mr. Gagan?" said we, our pronunciation caught from our interlocutor, "if you have no objection to inform us?"

"'Tis neither shame nor sorrow I feel to tell a respectable gentlemen like yourself how it happened: it was nearly thirty years ago, and I'm a happier man this day than poor Father Fox who repinted; besides, I'm to the fore; but he's gone."

"Tell us all about it, Larry."

"Why, you see, sir, when I got to be fifteen, I met my Norah at the wake of Biddy McKeon's husband's mother's cousin, twice removed—and the blue eyes of her, deep dark-blue, like a frosty night without a moon, and their roguish twinkle out of one corner behind a heavy long lash, with the sweet, sweet mouth of her, and her crimson cheek, made me mad with love for her. In coorse I was very young, and she was younger still. I was at school, working Gough and Minsuration; and she, the darlint, was at her sampler, and learning how to knit stockings and make shirts; so that we couldn't get married yet awhile. But we bruk a ring over it, and Norah Conlan and Larry Geoghegan swore on *the pathway of Paradise* that we would be one, and I sealed that oath upon her lips, you may be sure, with a smack that would sound from Cork to Kerry and back again. Well, your honour, as 'ill-luck would have it, the Conlans and Dunns had bad blood atween them—the Conlans of Dublin and the Dunns of Kildare. Now my mother was a Dunn, and I myself was brought up in my uncle's, near Naas, for eight years, and after that in my father's house in Dublin, and Norah lived in the same street, close by Stony-Batter. So whin the frinds on both sides found we were sweet upon aitch other, they were fretted about it entirely, and wouldn't hear of it no how. They said they'd sooner see her dead than married to a Dunn, and my people said they'd sooner see me 'listed for a sojer than thrun away upon a trapesing Conlan. It would have been prime sport to hear how they went on blagarding one another, only that they almost broke poor Norah's heart. They druv me all as one as mad. They riz all sorts of stories about her, and they told me that she spoke lightly of me, and of all my breed, seed, and generation; and that she was sure there was a bad drop in me of the Dunn blood, although she had been partial to me *wanst*. Och! yer honour, but that was the unkindest cut of all, for she owned that she loved me *wanst*, and that was like saying she loved me no longer.

"Well, with the one thing and the other, they got me to give her up and study for the priesthood. So I got a chutor and studied Latin and Euclid, but sorra much Greek I got, and they didn't ask it (but it was late to begin, after I was sixteen): and I stuck to it, and in five years I was able to enter Mayneuth. Dinny Fox, an ould schoolfellow and neighbour's son, intered at the same time, and a gay fellow he war. We used often, before that, to drown our sorrows in wine—that is, *whisky*—mine arising from blighted love, but his from his drouthy nature. You see, your honour, some min are of a sandy nature, they drink up every haet about them, and seem niver a fardin' better nor worse; and that was just like Dinny.

"The first Chrissymas holidays that come, I wint home, dressed in my best shuit, and quite genteel after being six months at college: and what could I do but visit Norah? The frinds on both sides, as I said, was not frindly, but I tuk no heed of that, for I heerd the gersha (*i.e.*, girl) was poorly; and besides, I wanted to show off to the proud Conlans how genteel I was in black superfine from top to toe. *Ain't I a born beauty?* said the crow when it stuck itself with the paycock's feathers, and I sed the same when I wint in my broadcloth to Norah's. 'How do you do, Miss Conlan?' said I,

with a distant and aristocratic air, 'I have just called to pay my respects, and to ax about your health.'

"Now my heart reproached me when I saw her cheek quite pale-like, that used to be as rosy as the summer's morn, and to see how meek and quate (quiet) she looked out of those once roguish and wicked eyes: but still I kept up as stout as Samson, and didn't let on to feel a bit onasy.

"Don't call me 'Miss Conlan,'" said she, 'dear Larry, but call me Norah, as you used to do long ago: call me your own *vourneen* Norah again, or my heart will break. It's almost broke already,' said she, and burst into tears, and flung herself into my arms.

"Arrah, your honour, it was then I felt how hard it was to be a priest, as she pressed me close to her buzzom, and smothered me with kisses, and cried and laughed in a breath. Her mother came in, and the rest of them, and saw much, but said nothing, except shaking hands with me all round—mighty kind entirely, which I tuk to be a good sign. They made me stay for dinner, and the father and brothers was cheerful over the social glass afterwards, and my heart warmed to them, and dear Norah blushed in the ould way again, and they were all delighted to see her cheeks with the bloom in them, and her eyes once more bright. And so they married us over night to save the darlint's life; and now that I'm the father of twelve childer I can wish the girls to be no better than my own dacent Norah, nor happier than their father has been ever since. In course I was rusty-cated, and more than that, for I niver wore a soutane, that is a student's gown, your honour, from that day to this."

"I'm glad, Larry, it has turned out so well after all, for many persons marry in haste, but repent at leisure. How did your friend Fox incur the displeasure of the authorities?"

"That's easy tould, if your honour has patience to listen. Dinny, sir, the Riverend Dionysius afterwards, was a great crony of mine; we had grown up together like two young pittayties or kittens, and we had a mighty liking for one another. Well, your honour, signs be on, when they gev him credit for wonderful devotion to the Virgin, I knew the saycret, that he joined it with devotion to something stronger than holy water. Ye see how it was, your honour. He had a cane or shillelah—a dacent bit of an alpeen as ever flourished in the hands of a Tipperary thrasher, and it was partly scooped out and made hollow. The top of it would hould a good half pint, and many a half pint of the genuine native—the rale Innishown—found its way into it. After the vesper bell, we two would go out into the grounds, or himself alone, and proceeding to the furthest western point, we—that is, he—would gaze upon the approaching night, leaning with his lips upon his hollow stick. His devotion to this vesper worship was long and eximply, and Dinny was looked upon as a pattern to the pious, for his evening adoration of the Virgin. Whenever any one came near him in his walk, he was always muttering '*Virgo piissima—ora pro nobis.*' Well, your honour, Dinny grew in the odour of sanctity either less careful, or else his devotion became so strong that it overpowered weak nature, for on one occasion he remained standing in the grounds long after every one had retired, and the sun had gone down; and

Dinny was required within for his studies. One of the danes [deans] went out for him, and found him standing, wrapt in devotion, the eyes fixed and the lips muttering. To every address of the dane he med no reply, but continued deaf, inflexible, absorbed in muttered worship, lost to all earthly things in heavenly meditations. But the dew was falling, and study was waiting, and the dane's punch was growing cold in the professor's refectory, which he had just mixed but was obliged to leave in order to bring in *ma bochal*; so that his Very Riverence grew impatient, and with that he touched my friend Dinny's elbow—when down he fell, like a bullock that was shot, or a deck of cards on a three-legged stool. Ach, your honour, thin the saycret came out, for his breath was mighty bad with the *aqua vite*, and nothing could insinse him into a knowledge of his situation; but every now and then he repeated his hymns to the Virgin, showing the devout bint of his soul amid it all. '*Virgo intemerata*,' he would say, while he lay upon his back; 'O spotless Virgin, *miserere mei*, have mercy upon me!' '*O Regina Caeli, ora pro nobis*—O queen of heaven, pray for us; for sure you're the darling mother of all the saints.'

"It isn't hard to guess how such a scene ended; but in twinty-four hours my jewel was sayted with me and Norah in Dublin, informing us of the unlucky result of his worship of the Virgin—bad luck to—I mane, good and blessed luck and satisfaction to her ladyship! But Mother Mary might have saved the poor boy, who doated on her for all that, and been none the worse for the good deed. I dunno whether Dinny considered his rusty-cation as an excuse for still more profound devotion to her worship, but rod in hand, he and me often made our libation to the Virgin from the end of his staff—and we always found our devotion grow the longer we stuck to it. The religious excitement sometimes proved too great for our weak nerves, for our very heads would spin, and our limbs totter, and our lips would stutter, and our words come thick, and sometimes we would even rave and fall prostrate, as we used to read of in the my-tology about the holy nuns at Delphi. Och, sir, but our devotion was great! We were perfect *voteens*! anything to aigual it on the tee-total earth was niver seen."

"That sounds to me, Larry, more like the flights of intoxication; but you certainly are queer folk in this Ireland of yours."

"*There's no disputin' that*, your honour, anyhow, as the fox said to the goose when he stroked down his paunch after he swallowed her goslings."

"But what became of your friend Dinny after this?"

"Why, your honour, you see he grew mighty onaisy, because he had a rale vocation to the priesthood, which myself never had. He had niver a Norah at his back to comfort him, and keep up his sperrits: an', further and over, he was mighty fond of books, so that he felt like a fish out of water, or like a hin in a horsepond, living with Norah and me, for he daren't face the anger of the people at home, when he was rusty-cated. Well, your honour, he became a true pinnitit, for a while at least, and was very diligent in sarving the mass at the Jesuit's chapel close by, and the Rev. Michael O'Farrelly, a kind priest, tuk to him kindly. And so, what with Father Mathew's pledge, and what with Father Mick's rippresintations, my friend

Dinny was restored after six months' rusty-cation, an' came out of Mayneuth in due time a full-blown curate."

"But did he observe the pledge all the time?"

"Well, sir, ye see, he did, and he did not. He vowed that he would not taste *one drop o' liquor* while he was in the College. But for this he found two dispensations, for he was a 'cute fellow entirely—"because, first of all," says he, 'Larry, I'm not bound to observe the rules of timperance whin I'm out of the College—a man ought to be bound by the tarms of his oath, *no more, no less* :—and agin,' says he, 'shure if I take *more than one drop*, or more than fifty drops, I don't violate my oath—for I'm well sure I niver tuk *one drop* in my life; they stick to one another, the drops does, just like so many bees when they swarrum on a bough; you can't take one off but a thousand comes with it.' Och, your honour, and many's the very big drop we had together on the foot of that explanation, for he was a great casuist, a mighty great casuist entirely, and knew Sanchez, Bailly, Dens, and Delahogue by heart. When whisky opened his heart, your honour, he used to out with a flood of eloquence about our troubles.

"'All min, Larry,' says he to me, 'all min has their wakenesses; and by the same rule,' says he, 'you, Larry, and me has our wakenesses—and mine is the *cruskeen laun*. And *grate min*,' says he, 'has *grate wakenesses*; so,' says he, 'as our wakenesses is *grate*, a sharp logician would know what inference to draw from that primmiss about our noble selves: but on that point,' says he, 'I'm silent, for modesty forbids me to press the conclusion. But now as to loving one's wife, sure Adam loved Eve, "the mother of all the living," and there can be no harrum in your loving Norah. I'm for the glass,' says he, 'not for the *lass*. But sure that first-rate saint, St. Peter himself, had a wife; and St. Paul, maybe, had one afterwards, for all as I know, and small blame to him if he had. And the priests in the Old Testament, from Aaron downwards, had wives; and in the New Testament they had wives; and I can't for the life of me see, Larry, why you couldn't be a very good priest, although the holy fathers turned you off o'-head of Norah. Sure your own father and mother were holy persons in wedlock, and it would be crule and scandalous to deny it? and why shouldn't they be satisfied if you war as holy as thim? I say this, Larry, for your sake, my boy,—for you see that the *colleen dhasses* has no shupayrior charm for me. *Paullo majora canamus*, as the divine Virgil says—*there's something I vally twenty times more than that*, as the cock said, you remimber, when he turned up the jewel on the dunghill, according to *Æsopus*. And would you be after hearing what that same liking is?—'Tis whisky, my lad o' wax—whisky, the dew of the mountain, the brightness of the sunbame, the water of life. Och, did you ivver see whisky a-makin', you jewel?' says he, in a burst of rapture—"because, if you didn't, you never seen the poetry of manufacture, and the joy of the world. First, you see," says he, 'there's the steepin' of the grain in a nice sweet boghole; and thin there's the drying of it to make it into malt; and thin there's the mashin' of it in hot water, a symbol of its futur' fate in the scramin' hot punch; and thin there's the mixin' of the wort; and thin there's the pouring the wash into the *pot*—*potikin*—*poteen*; and thin there's the

screwin' on the lid with the beautiful crooked neck to it, like the swans in the Phoenix Park; only that they're not a farthing candle to it; and thin there's the worrum with ever so many miles of twists and turns in it, coils and raytickle-ations and circumbendibuses, all cooped up in a nate tub; and thin there's the lightin' of the fire under it;—I don't think Polyphaymus or Promaytheus ivvir lit or stole a fire with half the excitement it causes. Och, and thin, Larry, after the *poteen* boils, and the stame rises, to see it come dribblin' out, drop, drop, drop, liquid goold, out of the dirty matayrial barley, sure 'tis a transmagnification that bates all the metamorphosys of Ovid, as far as Blarney bangs Banagher. Och, Larry,' says he—and he hugged me to his heart as he said it—'Och, Larry, to taste the first glass of that *aqua vite*, that well-be-named *water of life*, nayther could nor hot, but with the breath of the fire on it still, it's like a whiff of heaven, or a foretaste of the nectar of Paradise!

"Now, ye see," says he, "Larry, *that's my wakeness*: the drop—the sup—the bottle—the *truiskeen*. But very grate min had my own wakeness before now. Not to mintion Noah, who forgot himself entirely, there was Bacchus, who was the god of wine; but he'd a dale rather have been the god of whisky, if he'd had the good luck to have found it out, for, better than all the drugs in the doctor's shop, it stringthens the body, comforts the heart, and breeds good blood. The ancients showed their good sinse, for they worshipped him on the same altar with Minerva, and always made him the companion of the Muses, to show that Bacchus (maning of coorse rale Irish whisky) was the frind of Wisdom and Larning. Now Cato, you know, the stern cinsor—but if you don't know 'tis no matter, for you remember, Larry, you were late at the Humanities—Cato loved a drop: as Flaccus says—

"Narratur et prisci Catonis
Saepe mero caluisse virtus;"

which manes, Larry,—

"Of Cato, the strait-laced, 'tis commonly said,
His Cinsorship rarely went sober to bed."

And didn't Father O'Googgan die drunk? and did you ever know one priest in our parish that wasn't fond of the inticing glass? So that you see, Larry,' says he, 'we aren't after having a monopoly of this liking. The Scripture itself—he wint on waxin' warm with his eloquence—'is on our side, for it only farbids a man makin' a baste of himself with drink; a thing you, Larry, and me would niver think of doing with ourselves. I'll tell you, my friend,' says he, 'the most sublime text in all the Holy Writins: it's where St. Paul says to St. Timothy—mind ye, wan saint a-writin' to another,—*modico vino utere propter stomachum tuum et frequentes tuas infirmitates*—that is (for I'll translate it, because you're not well up in the classical tongues)—*take a drop every now and then, in rayson, when you feel you need it for the sinkin' o' the heart, or any other troublesome wakeness*. Now, Larry, I'm just like Timothy; for you see, savin' your priseness, I'm torminted with the stomach-ache every mornin', and I never get better till I get me a thimbleful of the native. 'Tis like

mother's milk to me, and after I get it, I'm as ready for any mischief, or study, as a race-horse is impatient for starting on the Curragh of Kildare."

"Your friend pleaded cleverly in favour of his 'wakeness,'" said we, "but what became of him afterwards?"

"He went out as a co-adjutor (they call them all curates now) to the Very Riverend Father Aloysius Grogan, Dane of Ballyknockamore; and when that priest died, Dinny, who was a good scholar in the humanities, and well liked by the bishop that was himself a jolly soul, got the parish when he had been only two years in it. You may be sure if he drunk before, he enjoyed himself like Bacchus now. He carried it so far that he was obliged by his parishioners to take the pledge: and he tuk it, and kept it as he did before; he swore he would never drink *a glass* of whisky in the county in which he lived. And he didn't, for he had a cask of the crayture in his bedroom, and his dear delight was to lie in bed sucking the stuff through a straw in a gimlet-hole in the cask. When this didn't satisfy him, he used to draw off a lot of it in a small joog, and off with him to the mearin' of the county, which wasn't far off, and there he used to squat his legs across the ditch that divided the two counties, and take a swig to his heart's content."

"I am afraid he would find all this impossible to justify in the court of conscience."

"Perhaps, ay; perhaps, no: it's just as you take it—but my friend Dinny would maintain that he was right, and would quote no ind of Fathers and Doctors to prove he was right. Well, your honour, on one occasion he gave up drinking for a whole fortnight, and he tuk desperate ill—a kind of low fever of longing I suppose it was, but he ate nothing, drank nothing, said nothing, only just lay with his eyes staring upwards. The doctors came to see him, and at last a regular consultation was going to be held on him; like a jury going to hang a pris'ner. Now, he knew they would never let him know their true opinion, so he got his servant, Darby Donohoe, to creep into a press in the small parlour where the doctors would spake with each other after seeing the patient, that he might hear the truth. 'Well, Darby,' says he, catechising him when he came back, 'what did they say of me?' 'Och, they said, your riverence dear, that you'd never get over it,' replied the faithful creature, crying. 'Did they say that—are you sure and certain, Darby?' 'In troth and by the Holy Vargin's thimble they said that same, and that your riverence would niver see the morrow's morning sun.' 'Och, thin,' says he, 'Darby, will ye's get me a gallon of punch, for I'm half dead with the drouth? One may as well die drunk as dry, if one can't live; and as I'm to die before morning in any case, they won't be able to say it was the dear mountain dew, the mother of comfort, which killed me.' Well, your honour, he drank three bottles of whisky that night made into hot punch, and *they saved his life*, more power to them! The doctors never came near him the next day, for they thought it was all over with him, and they told a carpenter to come and measure his coffin; only one met Darby in the street: 'What time did his riverence die last night, Darby? for we left him in the last gasp, mercy on his soul.' 'Sorra a bit of him's dead yet,' said Darby, 'but 'tis alive, and alive-like he is, like a cat that has nine lives to spare, and as many

more to the back of that. His riverence is mending fast. I left him calling out for a red herring.' Well, your honour, my friend chated grim Death that time, like the oyster that nipped the cook's finger and spit in his face, and walked off wid himself wid his hands in his pockets, and wouldn't be opened no how."

"I'm glad he escaped: is he living still?"

"Och, wirra strue, your honour, no. He's dead many's the long year. He'll never wear brogues again."

"How did it happen, that he died so young?"

"Ye see, your honour, he was always fond of what he called 'the poetry of Symposiacs,' and liked to see the malt transformed into whisky—or, as he used to term it, Ceres metymurphosed into Bacchus. Now, in a lake in his parish was an island, and a still, and the work going on constant. Some would say he went there, led by his fleshly appetite, to get a drop pure at the fountain head; but himself always maintained it was for *the poetry of the thing*. And so to be sure it was. He tuk a drop of the true Hippocrene, that had never been tested by the exciseman, but at the same time he tuk tremendous flights upon the Pegasus of poetry. He'd spout Shakspeare and Sophocles, two great English poets which your honour mayhap knows better nor me, and would get into a kind of trance of delight. That's how he came by his death. For, coming back from an excursion to the island, he grew high-poetical. Some divvel, I suppose, put it into his head, or danced before his eyes in the shape of a bottle, for he began with Macbeth:—

"'Is this a bottle which I see before me,
The neck o't toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A bottle of the mind—a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppress'd brain?
I see thee yet in form as palpable——'

But 'twas all a delusion, and the vision was indeed a 'fatal vision' to poor Denny. He reached out after the deludhering bottle, and overbalanshed the boat, and down he wint to the bottom like a dead attorney that the Father of Evil drowns to keep him from being hanged. One of the boatmen that saw him go down swore that when he rose to the surface, instead of making an effort to strike out from him and swim, the good Father put up his forefinger before him, as if he was calling to the bottle to come to him, and died with a wink on his eye, as much as to say: You darlint, I love you well! And they say, that if one goes by the shore of the lake alone after sunset, or crosses to the island, the Father is there still, winking with his eye, and beckoning with his hand, and saying: '*A-cushla* come 'ether; come—you darling *cruiskeen laun*.' That was the end of my friend and colleague Dinny Fox, or, as he called himself when he got to be full parish priest, the Riverend Dionysius O'Fox. It was the first and last time the hayro mixed his whisky with water, for he preferred it most times *nate*; and he was fond of proving that alcohol and water had no natural or chymical affinity. Sugar and limmon acted as

solvents of the difficulty: they were like the ring in marriage, which made different qualities combine and coalesce; but he held that the union was never a perfect and lasting one. When most perfect, he maintained that the water drowned the spirit; which was a thousand pities: he always wished the drowning to be the other way—that the spirit should drown the water. But here we are at the College gates, your honour, which I know so well; and my story's done."

"And a good one it is, Larry: I wouldn't have missed hearing anything so entertaining and so full of warning for much. Wait here till I return; and, first of all, ring the porter's bell."

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When I issued from the church porch I found Larry waiting for me, but his flushed face and imperfect enunciation led me to believe that he had been "tapping the admiral" during my absence. I challenged him thereon.

"I am afraid, Larry, you have been indulging in Father Fox's weakness while I was going over the College."

"Och, your honour, sure I've been doing no harrum—only 'worshipping the top of my rod' here, the very rod that Dinny used for his devotion many's the long year."

And he plunged his hand in the well of the car, and brought out a walking staff to me, which had neatly inserted inside its stem a tin tube, about the calibre of a rifle-barrel, and from eight to ten inches deep, closing a-top with a tin-japanned cover, like the lid of a snuff-box. It smelled like a whisky cask—a blending of two odours, an old ingrained and musty one, like the smell of an old smoking pipe, and a quite fresh perfume from Larry's new libation.

"Is this the very tube that Father Dinny sucked perdition out of?" asked we; "surely his fate should be a warning."

"The very one, your honour. When he died, as they knew we were heart friends, buzzom brothers, they told me I might choose what I liked of the poor fellow's personal goods for a keepsake; so I chose the staff that had so often proved a comfort and a support to us both. The wand of the magician and the rod of Moses never wrought such wonders as this; for, faix, it's a handkicher that wipes the wet eye, and a plaster that makes the broken heart whole."

"I hope your use of it will never cause you sorrow, and bring it," I said: "like fire, whisky may be a good servant, but is a bad master."

"Och, your honour, sure it'll never master me. I seldom take as much as a thimbleful; and when I do it always does me good. I'm as sober as a judge this blessed minute (hiccup); and you'll see in what style I'll drive your honour into Dublin."

"What place is that opposite?" asked we—an obelisk of respectable dimensions standing on a series of double arches resembling a triumphal arch, and forming a conspicuous object in the scene.

"That's Grange William (hiccup)—built by the good Lady Conolly in the hard summer."

"When was that, and how was the summer hard?"

more to the back of that. His riverence is mending fast. I left him calling out for a red herring.' Well, your honour, my friend chated grim Death that time, like the oyster that nipped the cook's finger and spit in his face, and walked off wid himself wid his hands in his pockets, and wouldn't be opened no how."

"I'm glad he escaped: is he living still?"

"Och, *wirra strut*, your honour, no. He's dead many's the long year. He'll never wear brogues again."

"How did it happen, that he died so young?"

"Ye see, your honour, he was always fond of what he called 'the poetry of Symposiacs,' and liked to see the malt transformed into whisky—or, as he used to term it, Ceres metymorphosed into Bacchus. Now, in a lake in his parish was an island, and a still, and the work going on constant. Some would say he went there, led by his fleshly appetite, to get a drop pure at the fountain head; but himself always maintained it was for *the poetry of the thing*. And so to be sure it was. He tuk a drop of the true Hippocrene, that had never been tested by the exciseman, but at the same time he tuk tremendous flights upon the Pegasus of poetry. He'd spout Shakspeare and Sophocles, two great English poets which your honour mayhap knows better nor me, and would get into a kind of trance of delight. That's how he came by his death. For, coming back from an excursion to the island, he grew high-poetical. Some divvel, I suppose, put it into his head, or danced before his eyes in the shape of a bottle, for he began with Macbeth:—

" 'Is this a *bottle* which I see before me,
The *neck* o't toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee:—
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but
A *bottle* of the mind—a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain?
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But 'twas all a delusion, and the vision was indeed a 'fatal vision' to poor Denny. He reached out after the deludhering bottle, and overbalanced the boat, and down he wint to the bottom like a dead attorney that the Father of Evil drowns to keep him from being hanged. One of the boatmen that saw him go down swore that when he rose to the surface, instead of making an effort to strike out from him and swim, the good Father put up his forefinger before him, as if he was calling to the bottle to come to him, and died with a wink on his eye, as much as to say: You darlint, I love you well! And they say, that if one goes by the shore of the lake alone after sunset, or crosses to the island, the Father is there still, winking with his eye, and beckoning with his hand, and saying: '*A-cushla* come 'ether; come—you darling *cruiskeen laun*.' That was the end of my friend and colleague Dinny Fox, or, as he called himself when he got to be full parish priest, the Riverend Dionysius O'Fox. It was the first and last time the hayro mixed his whisky with water, for he preferred it most times *nate*; and he was fond of proving that alcohol and water had no natural or chymical affinity. Sugar and limmon acted as

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"Faix, 'tis myself doesn't know whether it was wet or dry; but I suppose it was before I was born."

After this, the conversation with our spoilt priest of a Jehu became painful from his inebriation. Mr. Larry began to drive at random, now lashing away at a great rate, and then suddenly pulling up the horse, so as almost to upset the car. A sample of the disconnected talk must close our communication, already extended beyond due limits.

"He's a fine horse, your honour. I've often druv him sixty miles a day (hiccup), and he nivvir said a word agin it. But he's not what he was (hiccup), for ye see, your honour, we were took in a buying him (hiccup), for he trotted home like a gentleman and a Christian (hiccup); but whin he was put in the stable he tuk to roaring like the d—— (hiccup). Well, your honour, they poulticed his jaws and they doctored him (hiccup) and they physicked him (hiccup), and they gev him everything in the wide world except the only thing that would a done him good (hiccup)—I mane whisky; and so he thickened in the wind because the poultices didn't work (hiccup), and so he roars ever since. But 'tisn't the poor crayture's fault any how (hiccup)—for he'd like to hould his tongue like a good Christian—but the brute bastes of doctors (hiccup) that didn't manage his poulticing well. Bad manners to them: I wish I had the ducking of them in the Liffey.—Gee-hep—get along (hiccup). There's sixty miles an hour yet, your honour (hiccup). I druv him sixty miles yesterday and he never said a word agin it (hiccup), and I'll driv him sixty miles to-morrow (hiccup) and he'll never say a word agin it. Ya—hoo—get along, Patrick."

This is as literal a transcript as we could possibly make from memory of the incoherent utterances of our driver, which were mixed with no few imprecations on his eldest son, who was the chief doctor of the unhappy horse, and had failed in his attempts to cure him. We pledge our word for its unvarnished truth, and that we can lay our hand upon Larry any day of our life.

But, painful as this exhibition was, Larry had his good qualities as well as his faults—was a faithful and loving husband, had brought up a large family without being beholden to foreign help, and was able to live in easy circumstances by his industry. We say this not to justify the faults of the man, but to show that he had a meritorious as well as a weak side.

We are sorry to have to add that, from the growing prosperity of the country, Ireland is beginning to stand in need of a new Temperance Reformation.

But here we are once more in Dublin, and Larry is now sober. He seemed ashamed of himself, and refused the usual honorarium for the driver on so long an excursion as ours, and wished only to take his fare. He hoped his honour would forgive his indiscretion.

"With all my heart," said I, "but you must look to a higher quarter for forgiveness, for against a higher power have you offended. And this half-crown I must insist upon you taking, if it was only to get a Sunday ribbon for one of the girls, and a new cap for Norah." And so we parted mutually content; I liked the man somewhat for his frankness; and did not altogether regret having encountered a specimen of a Spoilt Priest.

WHICH WILL HE MARRY?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

CHAPTER I.

IN the month of October, 184—, a good deal of excitement prevailed in the town of Barnston on the question of who was likely to get the situation of agent for the Southern Bank, lately become vacant by the death of Jones Robertson, Esq.

Barnston was a town containing a population of about seven thousand. One or two bankers, a sprinkling of lawyers, doctors, clergy, and retired officers constituted its aristocracy. Five hundred a year was competence, and a thousand wealth, in that happy spot; and as the agency for the Southern Bank was worth five hundred a year, besides house-rent, coal, gas, and taxes, it will easily be understood that the appointment was a desirable one.

After a fortnight of speculation and feverish excitement, it turned out that local aspirants were one and all doomed to disappointment. The agency was conferred on Mr. Patrick Playfair, a young gentleman educated in the head office of the bank in the great city of Nework.

Well, if Mr. Black had not got it, neither had that blockhead Mr. White; and if Mr. White had not got his deserts, the bank had at least been too wise to give it to a fellow like Black. Nobody was jealous of Mr. Playfair. He was felt to be a compromise, and it was generally admitted that society in Barnston would be improved by a little new blood. Mr. Playfair was accordingly received with open arms. Everybody called, and invitations to dinners poured in upon him. His good qualities were unmistakable. He was good looking. He was twenty-four. He was agent for the Southern Bank, and a bachelor. He was pronounced to be the greatest acquisition which society had made for some years. He was not much of a talker certainly, but he was a quiet, modest, gentlemanly, and unassuming young man. Of course as he was likely to be a fixture in Barnston, with a position to keep up, he would marry; and a very interesting question indeed was, which of the belles of Barnston would Mr. Patrick fall in love with. Without wishing in any way to disparage the belles of Barnston, or to hold them too cheaply, I believe that with a very moderate amount of trouble he might have succeeded with any one of them. He was, in fact, master of the position, which was this:—there were in Barnston five-and-twenty young ladies between the ages of seventeen and twenty-seven, and positively only two marriageable bachelors, Mr. Patrick included, to be divided amongst them. Moreover, of the two, Mr. Patrick was very decidedly the most eligible, for his rival, Mr. Brown of the Eastshire Bank, had only a salary of three hundred, with not nearly so good a house, and he was generally considered to be in several respects objectionable in style and manner.

About six months after his arrival in Barnston the popularity of Mr. Playfair reached its maximum. It then began rapidly to decline. It was not that he gave himself airs exactly, but society had begun to detect a cynical,

satirical turn of mind about him. "You are never exactly sure that he is not laughing at you," was a remark frequently made concerning him. He eschewed "argument," which was a favourite style of conversation in Barnston. He seemed to possess many of the negative qualities of one who should be esteemed a good fellow; but he was too fond of his own company and did not appear to care for society. Then his attendance at church was not quite what it ought to have been; and to crown his eccentricities, he had not shown the slightest tendency to fall in love with any one of the twenty-five young ladies of Barnston.

Again, there was a Whiggish tendency about him abhorrent to the soul of the aristocracy of his adopted town, which was Tory to a man and to a woman. He did not oppose innovations, local and imperial, with a vigour becoming to his position as a citizen of Barnston. He took in newspapers and recommended to the club books whose views were of the most heterodox kind. He was clearly a "dangerous" man. Then when the ladies twitted him respecting his opinions, he took the perfectly insufferable course of making no reply; and even when the lovely and engaging Miss Arabella Spence adopted the bold and original plan of siding with him in the "Market Place Improvement" question, he showed himself shamefully and detestably callous to the value of the alliance. When she talked enthusiastically about "our side," he merely replied by one of those looks and curt observations which had led to him being termed "The Cynic," by Barnston society.

He attended to his business, however, that was undeniable; and it would have been inexcusable had he neglected it, for its duties were not severe. He entered his office every morning as the clock struck ten, and his clerk put the bank shutters up as the clock struck three. By half-past three he was taking his walk; and walk he did every day, wet or dry—a habit much commented upon and censured in Barnston, being supposed to be in some way mysteriously connected with his cynicism and celibacy. He was quite aware of the talk which his habit gave rise to. He was quite aware that Mrs. Black was on the watch for him at her window every day at half-past three. He was aware that as he started Mrs. White was observing to her daughter from behind her curtains, "There goes Mr. Playfair as usual." He knew that a daily vote of censure was being passed upon him on account of his way; his perseverance in it must therefore be considered as indicative of considerable strength of mind.

His manner of life was one which might have suited fifty or sixty very well, when a man is tired of being tempest tost, and all that he wants is peace. But at five-and-twenty the case is different. To men endowed with any special practical energy the thing would have been intolerable; to Mr. Playfair, not so blessed or cursed by nature, it was not intolerable, at least it had not yet become so; but it was very tiresome. He was not a very ambitious man, but he had both some intellect and affections which were sadly in want of scope. He would have liked society if he could have got any to suit him; but he preferred solitude to uncongenial company. Accordingly he indulged himself in solitude, in which respect he was quite wrong. He would have liked to marry and have his hearth cheered by the smile of woman and the

prattle of children; but if he was particular about men, about women he was fastidious. With a wisdom beyond his years, he had often foreshadowed to himself the misery which would be the lot of a domestic nature like his own—a nature which had no happiness in clubs, horse races, or public dinners—should he ever be married to a fool—to a woman who would bore him with small talk—who would laugh when there was nothing to laugh at, and who, when there was a point of humour, would never see it. “There is not a woman in Barnston,” he had often reflected, bitterly, “to marry whom would not be unhappiness to both of us.” There is Miss Rodyk—pretty, ladylike girl enough, but no more brains than a butterfly. Miss Penfold—she is of the same stamp. Miss Arabella Spence,—here he laughed; he knew that Miss Arabella and her mamma were working hard to draw their net around him.

Miss Arabella was pretty, and to wise men and fools alike, beauty is a powerful argument. If she had only had a better style and manner about her—had she only had a better-modulated voice and less of a Barnston accent—in short, had she altogether been externally more a lady, she might have succeeded. Even as it is, no saying what may happen. Assiduous coaxing and flattery do wonders, even with the more rational part of mankind.

“Heigh ho!” yawned poor Mr. Playfair as he came in from his walk on the hot afternoon of the 1st August, 184—, “it is a weary, jog-trot, aimless life this of mine—a mere dawdle; and oh, confound it, what a bore!—didn’t I promise to dine to-day with the Rodyks? What a nuisance.”

CHAPTER II.

SHOULD he dine with the Rodyks, or send an excuse?—that was the question. He remembered that he had pleaded a headache the last time he was asked, so he must go, or else they would be offended. But, ah me! it was a dreary prospect. Did not he know by heart every dish that there would be for dinner—the inevitable candied orange and pink *bon-bons* that would appear at dessert? There would be the same gossip, the same weary old jokes. Miss Arabella Spence would be there, and singing at him the same old songs. And he was the envied and successful young man of Barnston, was he? Behold the vanity of worldly success.

The expression of Mr. Playfair’s countenance, on entering the drawing-room at Mr. Rodyk’s, cannot be said to have been happy. It was palpable to the most ordinary observer that he felt bored. He would have been greatly astonished had any one imparted this truth to him; for being at all times conscious of a strong effort to appear cheerful and interested in company, he had a tendency, like every one who is so conscious, to believe that the success is commensurate with the vigour of the endeavour. He was at heart, so far at least, an amiable fellow, that he would have been dreadfully annoyed had the slightest suspicion ever crossed him that his manner to old Rodyk said, as plainly as words could, “My dear sir, be merciful. I have heard that story at least fifty times. Pray talk of the weather, for a variety.”

“Mr. Playfair, will you take Miss Hathorn in to dinner?” said Mrs. Rodyk

to Patrick. Patrick assented, but looked as if he had not quite taken the thing in. "Miss Hathorn," repeated Mrs. Rodyk, rather testily. "She is a friend and a distant relation, I fancy, of Miss Arabella's. Her home is in London. She is visiting the Spences, and is likely to be here for a week or two. Come, and I will introduce you to her."

Mr. Playfair's feelings were of a mixed kind at the prospect of the phenomenon of having a stranger allotted to him. If she should, by some miracle, turn out to be a sensible, nicely-mannered, young woman, this would of course be very charming; but then the odds were tremendous against this. Then he would certainly have to talk a little, whether he had anything to say or not, and he hated above all things having to do this, as it invariably led to his saying things which, on a review next day, he felt to be weak and in bad taste. He was quite indifferent as to what Mrs. Black or Mrs. White might say about him, but he had a high value for his own good opinion of himself.

Miss Hathorn possessed the supreme confidence of a Londoner come to see the manners and customs of the funny little folks who live in the provinces. She had too much sense and tact, however, to let the funny little folks see this. She was a much better actor than Mr. Playfair. When one or two middle-aged gentlemen addressed her as "ma'am," and asked her to take wine with them, she replied by a sweet and gracious smile.

"It must be very nice, I think, Mr. Playfair," she said, "charming, indeed, to live in a little community like this, where you are all like brothers and sisters to one another."

"Why, we are all tired of the sight of one another. Barnston is the slowest spot on the face of creation."

Miss Hathorn smiled. She had a sweet, winning, smile; but though she knew this, there was not a trace of self-consciousness in it. "I suppose, then, Mr. Playfair, that you would prefer living in town to living in the country? And this, I suppose, means that you are ambitious—that you want to make a large fortune, or get into parliament, or something of this kind. Is not this really the cause, now, of your abusing poor Barnston?"

Mr. Playfair disclaimed ambitious motives, though, perhaps, not wholly averse to having them attributed to him. "Perhaps, then, your ambition takes a literary turn?" This was nearer the truth. Mr. Playfair did while away some of his spare time by flirting a little with literature. Besides being a contributor to the *Barnston Mail*, he occasionally did a little for a London magazine; and a vague notion had for some time been floating in his head that he might kill time next winter by writing a novel.

Habitually shy and reticent respecting his literary avocations—his fame being considerably magnified in the eyes of Barnston by mistiness—he was led, in the course of the evening, to make a confidante of Miss Hathorn. Somehow, when he talked to her, there stole over him a bland sense of being appreciated. Here was a woman to whom it was possible to talk about books and pictures, without being irritated by the nonsense which such topics were sure to elicit from any one of the Barnston five-and-twenty. Then Miss Anne Hathorn had a pair of very intelligent dark-blue eyes, which she knew

very well how to manage. Her hands and arms were also very pleasant to behold, a fact which she was by no means ignorant of, while at the same time the knowledge sat easily and gracefully upon her. It was the pleasantest dinner-party that Mr. Patrick Playfair had ever been at in his life. He retired to rest in better spirits than he had experienced for the last two or three years—so delightful is the sensation to man of having his vanity stroked the right way by a really skilful feminine hand. There was, however, a tinge of melancholy in his happiness. Miss Hathorn's visit was to be a short one, and she had demurely expressed a sad presentiment on her part that when it ended "she might never see this beautiful part of the country again."

I wonder what were the feelings of the callous-hearted young woman when she made this observation? She would, I suspect, as soon have thought of marrying an Esquimaux, and settling in the Arctic regions, as of settling in Barnston. She also had, however, spent a very pleasant evening. She surveyed her gems and her blue silk dresses, as she restored them to their repositories, with feelings analogous to those with which a warrior may be supposed to look upon his armour when he doffs it after a victorious field. Mr. Playfair was quite the kind of man whom she liked to flirt with; but she had no intention of marrying the agent of a bank in a country town. Her husband must have money and position to bestow upon her. Then he must be a man of good religious principle—one who would lead her by easy and pleasant paths, in this world, into happiness in the next. It will thus be seen that, though a flirt, Miss Anne Hathorn was in the main a very prudent and sensible young woman.

CHAPTER III.

It was certainly an error on the part of Miss Arabella Spence and her mamma, looking to the game which they were playing, to invite a young woman so dangerous to the peace of man as Miss Anne Hathorn to pay them a visit.

Miss Arabella had been at Mr. Rodyk's dinner-party the other day, and though really, generally speaking, a very good-natured young lady, she had viewed with grave displeasure what she termed the "goings on" between her friend and Mr. Playfair. Of course it was only her dear Anne's way—there was nothing in it; still it would be proper, she thought, on a fitting opportunity, to give her a hint that such things were not quite proper.

Mrs. Spence is going to have a little entertainment to-day, and Miss Anne and Miss Arabella are at present dressing and chatting in the same room. Perhaps we may venture upon a little eavesdropping.

"Are you not afraid that you will be rather late for dinner, Anne dear?" observes Miss Arabella, glancing for an instant from her looking-glass to her watch; "you don't seem to have made any progress at all for the last twenty minutes."

"It is owing to this horrid bracelet. I really can't make up my mind whether to wear the pebble or the aqua-marine. Indeed, I am not sure that plain gold does not look best after all. What do you think, Bella dear?"

Miss Anne here innocently admires her own hand and arm. Noting which

little action of vanity on her friend's part, by force of kindred instinct, Miss Spence, with a slightly satirical laugh, replies—

"I am sure I don't know, dear; but as it only wants five minutes to six, I think it might be as well if you made your mind up. You have had that pebble one off and on five or six times now."

"Do you vote for pebbly then?"

"I don't think it signifies in the very least. There is no one coming to dinner that you need be so awfully particular about. But the fact is, Anne," continued Arabella, making a sudden plunge, "you are a regular, downright flirt—and I wonder how you *dare* go on so."

"In what respect, Bella dear?" inquires the accused one, in a gentle tone of voice, in marked contrast to the *false* *setto* in which Miss Spence had ended her last sentence. "What is it that I do which is wrong? Do tell me. I like to be told of my faults."

"Flirt!" was the brief but energetic reply. "Flirt, awfully!"

"I do not think that I am singular. At least it seems to me that almost every one does a little in this way."

"I don't," replied Arabella, emphatically; and her friend, too completely mistress of the position to feel irritated, was good-natured enough not to reply, "Because you can't." The fact being that Miss Spence's talents were not of the kind which succeed in the airy amusement of flirting. "And I can assure you, Anne," continued Bella, "that flirting is a great mistake—if you want to get off, that is to say."

Miss Anne, who could scarcely control her voice from inclination to laugh, replied, "But I am quite young yet, Bella dear. I don't want to be married yet—I really don't."

"H'm! Dare say. You will be twenty-four next spring, my love—not so *very* young."

"Do you like this ring, Bella?"

"It is well enough. What did you pay for it?" replies Miss Spence, who has at all times an artless way of asking for any information which she may desire to possess.

"I paid — pounds for it."

"It was absurdly dear."

"I am sorry you don't like it, as I bought it for you."

The heart of woman opens to a present of jewellery. Arabella examined the ring more closely, and declared that it was really *very* pretty; and that dear Anne was a naughty, extravagant little thing. And the clock having now struck six, Miss Spence and Miss Hathorn twined their arms round each other's waist, and entered the drawing-room a sweet and tender picture of feminine friendship.

Mrs. Spence and her daughter would rather not have asked Mr. Playfair to this party; but where there are only two young gentlemen in a community, it is difficult to have an entertainment without inviting them both. So it had been necessary to ask Patrick, and he had accepted with alacrity. But, alas! Miss Hathorn was not allotted to him on this occasion. They were far divided at the dinner-table; and the prize had fallen to a Mr. Flockhart

—a young gentleman fresh from Oxford. Mr. Flockhart did not talk much, for talking was not his forte; but his manner declared, as plainly as words could, that he considered himself the only gentleman in the room, and Miss Hathorn the only lady. How the deuce he came to find himself where he was, he delicately hinted, was a problem which he had not quite succeeded in solving.

When the gentlemen came into the drawing-room after dinner, there was one vacant place on the sofa beside Miss Hathorn. Mr. Playfair hesitated for an instant. Not so Mr. Flockhart, who glided into the place as if it was his birthright. Fortune, however, so far befriended Patrick, that a vacancy soon occurred on the other side, and this time he secured the position.

Anne was much too great a genius in her own line to find any difficulty in flirting with two men at once. She could flirt with men who had nothing to say as well as with talkers. While she talked to Mr. Playfair about his own tastes, habits, and pursuits, she managed the other man by a skilful play of hands and eyes.

It was the creed of this young woman that men were very vain indeed, and very seldom either died of love or were even made seriously ill by it. She was therefore perhaps not very wicked after all, if she indulged her own vanity a little at the expense of theirs. She may improve as she grows older. Meanwhile, I fear there can be no doubt that she was both greatly pleased and amused by a perception of the feeling which she saw had sprung up in an instant between Mr. Playfair and Mr. Flockhart. The Flockhart feeling she saw with amusement to be "Wretched provincial—bad accent—hasn't been at Oxford or Cambridge—doubt if he has been much beyond Barnston in his life—absurd to suppose myself cognizant of the existence of a fellow of this kind. Of course she is only laughing at him; but she ought not to do it." While she saw that Mr. Playfair was saying to himself, "Brainless puppy—hasn't an idea in his head." She also saw that he had a distinct consciousness that he was getting the worst of it. And there is no doubt he had. At school, at college, or in business, he felt that he could have defeated his rival; but in a drawing-room he felt himself at a disadvantage. The tones and looks of well-bred insolence were weapons with which his education had not furnished him. He felt, indeed, that both about his rival and Miss Hathorn there was something—*quantum valeat*, it at least availed in drawing-rooms—an ease and well-bred confidence which neither he nor any one in the room but them had. And quickly as his perceptions caught these truths, shyness and self-consciousness came down upon him and shackled him in every limb. It is no use to fight against these demons when once they get hold of you. You are like a fish in a net: the more you flounder and struggle the worse becomes your involvement.

But though amused and gratified to see two men detesting each other from love of her, it was not part of Miss Anne's nature to wish that any one should retire from her presence with mortified self-love. Mr. Flockhart having been summoned away, she immediately devoted herself to the task of restoring Mr. Playfair to cheerfulness. "I am sure, Mr. Playfair," she said, "that we are indebted to you for that amusing 'Sketch of a Tomboy,' which I read yesterday in the *Barnston Mail*."

"Ah, did you like it?" inquired Patrick, his head beginning to emerge from the net.

"No, I didn't. I think you are much too satirical. I am growing quite afraid of you, and I think I shall now run away from you."

"Pray don't; sit and talk to me for a little."

"But I don't think that I have anything to say; and you know that *you* do not like to talk when *you* have nothing to say."

"I am sure you had plenty to say to Mr. Flockhart during dinner."

"Oh, but *you* are quite different. I can say anything that comes into my head to Mr. Flockhart. He is so good-natured. Now I don't think that you are. As I have said, I feel quite afraid of you after reading your sketches. You might be making copy out of me for your next article. I think I like good-natured men better than clever ones."

"But I am really very tolerably good-natured."

She gave him a glance which meant, "Ah, are you deceiving me? I fear you are. How shall a woman trust a man?" It was a touching, an appealing look. It shot him right in the bull's-eye of his heart, as she meant it to do. It is a merciful provision of nature that women seldom know how to use their own power. If every woman understood how to flatter with skill and grace, what would become of mankind? I suppose the evil would cure itself. We should neglect our businesses, and then there would be a deficiency of money with which to buy gewgaws; and then—and then—the mind loses itself in the vast contemplation—what would women do without silks, gems, and Brussels carpets to occupy their intellects?

(To be continued.)



JUST HALF A MILLION.

IT is but a decade ago
 Since I burst on the world of Mayfair,
 Like a meteor, all brilliance and glow,
 A vision of loveliness rare.

I think that I see, even now,
 The reflection my tall mirror framed,
 The daisy wreath circling my brow,
 The gems on my bosom that flamed.

A moonlight of white satin glimmering
 'Neath airaphine floating and flowing;
 And dewdrops of crystal all glittering,
 On jasmine still creeping and growing.

And, twined like a luminous snake,
 My dark rippling hair, loosely bound;
 How often, in pastime, a shake
 Has rolled it in waves to the ground.

Cimmerian lashes hung, veiling
The soft violet depths of my eyes,
Which shone like the morning star sailing
In the lustrous dew of the skies.

On my cheeks fair Aurora had breathed,
And touched with her wing my mouth's portal,
And the gifts that a goddess had wreathed,
I thought, in my triumph, immortal.

And thus in my beauty's first flush
I burst on the world of Mayfair;
Oh, there comes to me still the 'mazed "Hush!"
That preluded the wondering stare.

"Who is she? a star from what sphere?
Ye gods, what an exquisite flower!"
And the answer, "'Tis Ellen de Vere,
She has only her beauty for dower."

Shall I tell how they bowed down before me,
How they hung on my accents for life;
How they swore that they lived to adore me,
But how none of them said, "Be my wife?"

What, none did I say? I forgot—
One whispered that magical word;
If I loved him, what matter, he'd nought
But a glorious name and his sword.

Some wild bitter words and we parted,
Never again to meet here;
They said that he died broken-hearted—
And I am still Ellen de Vere.

Thus a queen for two seasons I reigned,
How quickly such bright moments fly!
In the third my proud empire had waned,
And a golden star ruled in the sky.

In vain, with insouciant air,
I languished through valse and cotillon:
Not on me now the rapturous stare,
That feasted on Just Half a Million.

'Tis true she was stumpy and coarse,
And decidedly oblique her vision,
And her voice, like a raven's, was hoarse,
But its keynote was Just Half a Million.

Her father had made all his gains
In the leap they call Charki de Chilian ;
Princes' blood coursed in my veins,
But then I had not Half a Million.

In vain did I melody pour,
And quiver and shake in Italian ;
What Orpheus yet wrote a score
That would score beside Just Half a Million ?

The hearts that my beauty glanced off,
A golden-barbed arrow hit surer ;
And the coronets once I'd a chance of,
Were rolled in the gold dust before her.

But I gathered my regal robes round me,
And sat in my glorious meridian,
For the halo of beauty that crowned me,
Had no lustre like Just Half a Million.

Half Mayfair went mad with chagrin
When she married the Duc de Rubillion ;
Young, handsome, and noble—but then,
His estates required Just Half a Million.

And a dream of the past is my spring,
And my summer is fading away ;
Ah ! beauty is swifter on wing
Than the red gold that laughs at decay

And the lustrous light of the morning
Has deepened to day in my eyes ;
And the roseate portal, so charming,
Has paled 'neath the north-wind of sighs.

And the face with its exquisite bloom,
Its sparkle, its freshness, its glow—
They called it a Hebe's whilom—
'Tis pale as still Hesperus now.

Majestic and ample the figure,
So graceful, so sylphlike, so mignon ;
And though people still rave of my chevilleur,
The half is an Isidore's chignon.

No longer from gossamer nest
My shoulders like snowdrops are peeping ;
In velvet and rich moiré drest,
Their ivory splendours are sleeping.

And I string not my lyre to Enato,
 Nor warble Rossini's soft lays;
 But I dream through a Hadyn's sonata,
 And my voice swells in classical praise.

And the gay chords of life cease to vibrate,
 Then—what though they sneer in Mayfair?—
 I think that I'll smile on the curate,
 And cease to be Ellen de Vere.

J. G. S.



SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBACH.

VIII.

THERE was no separate theatre, or concert-room proper, in the village; and all the entertainments, which were few and far between, were transacted either in one of the schoolrooms, or in the large room of the "Jolly Graziers." Every now and then, quite at remote intervals however, the Celebrated Sisters Bloomer, or the Great Indian Juggler, Monsieur Leopardini (which, as you know, is pure Hindoostanee), would pay the village a visit; and then the villagers had the opportunity of enjoying a concert with songs "in character," or a conjuring performance, in which tricks that were as old as woman's love were performed for new in the most audacious manner, with the usual reward of audacity—*sortes fortuna juvat*—and if Leopardini didn't do the strong thing with his "novelties," there never was a conjuror who did.

But the great excitement for the village was when the distinguished Professor Wyndham, M.C.P.B., as his bill said, paid the inhabitants a visit, and delivered one of his thrilling lectures on Electro Biology. The youth of the village managed to turn these occasions into carnivals of courting. In the first place there was crowding; and whatever may be the feelings of old folks who have lost some of their sensibility, a couple of sweethearts in the village never object to being "jammed in." In the second place, it was sometimes necessary, for the Professor's purposes, to turn off the gas for a short period. Now it is a well-known fact that when lovers have to go through a long railway tunnel, they have so much time to think about it, that they very often don't kiss; but when the time is short, and the cue is now or never, they pluck up courage, and the ancient, ever fresh salute is transacted like a flash of lightning. I have seen it done, in spite of the lowering of the gas, at one of Professor Wyndham's highly scientific lectures on Electro Biology. But it was not merely, or chiefly, little opportunities like these that made the soirées of the professor so attractive to the sweet-heating youth of the village. It was the fearful joy of seeing Jane's

young man mesmerised, and wondering what he would do, and what answers he would make to questions turning on his sentiments as a man and lover; such as "What do you like best in all the world?" Jane, sitting in a reserved seat, carrying her elbows genteelly, blushes from the points of her toes to the tips of her ears, fully expecting to hear her lover say—something tender; but he makes answer—Pea-soup! Yet Jane's fearful joy is not long postponed, for the Professor, defying grammar, next puts the question, "Who do you love best in all the world?"—and thus adjured, the unblushing youth says Jane Mills. Now, probably not more than twenty or a dozen of the people present know Jane; but this answer is greeted with irrepressible volleys of laughter, and shouts of "Stand up, Jane!" and by to-morrow morning almost everybody in the neighbourhood will know Jane, and Jane's love-story, so far as it has been brought out by Professor Wyndham.

A passage from Tomboy's diary will show that one night a disturbance of a very peculiar nature took place at the Professor's lecture:—

"*Tuesday.*—Last night I had the pleasure of attending at one of Professor Wyndham's lectures on Electro Biology, delivered at our Assembly Room, a handsome apartment in connection with the 'Jolly Graziers.' These lectures are, as the intelligent reader will readily suppose, somewhat exciting, but the one which was delivered on Monday was more than usually so, owing to an occurrence which disturbed the harmony of the evening, and brought the proceedings to a close somewhat earlier than was anticipated. The Professor is usually accompanied by a lady, upon whom he performs mesmeric experiments. She is denominated Clairvoyante Celestine in the Professor's announcements; but Miss Russett and I do not think her real name is Celestine. She is rather hollow in the cheeks, and I am sure she *paints*. Sometimes she sings when in the mesmeric trance, and I have seen her perform the Claymore dance *with her eyes shut*. Last night, nearly at the end of the lecture, when she opened her eyes upon being released from the trance by the Professor, and turned to make her parting bow or curtsey to the crowded audience, she appeared to rivet her gaze upon some object at the further end of the room. I distinctly saw her open her mouth wide, and her eyes twitched in a most remarkable manner. She then uttered a scream, *not a loud one*, and sprang down from the platform upon the floor of the room. As the platform was only temporary, and made of planks covered with some old green baize, it will not excite surprise that the jump she took loosened it, so that the lecture-table fell over, and the *bottle of water* was thrown down; it received no injury, though the *tumbler* was broken, and of course the water was spilt. Mademoiselle Celestine almost brushed me with her dress, which, when I saw it close, seemed rather shabby; but there was not much time for *minutia*, for she had got to the door in a few seconds of time. It may be supposed that there was a disturbance; and I *distinctly* saw a shabbily-dressed, but genteel-looking man at the back hurry out at the door, followed by Mademoiselle Celestine, who exclaimed 'Stop him!' There are conflicting reports as to what ensued; but the *general* opinion in the village appears to be that Mademoiselle Celestine had *discovered something* by electricity, and desired to bring the offender to justice. Captain

Boldero has returned to his duties at the Acacias, but nothing has yet transpired with respect to the body which he is alleged to have found on the door-step, although I have endeavoured to draw him into conversation on the subject. On my asking him if he did not think life very mysterious, and often composed of *unexpected occurrences*, he coloured up, and merely replied, 'Do you think so?' But I am determined to sift this enigma to the bottom for the sake of my friend Mrs. Branch, though I do not quite *approve* of her *religious principles*, no more do the young ladies at Miss Russett's."

IX.

I never thought Mr. Foat a nice-looking man myself, but a good many people in the village did, and especially a good many members of our Zion. He had unquestionably a mild face, and you could not say the mildness was put on, or was evidently maintained by an effort. But I never thought much, myself, of Mr. Foat's mildness of countenance. It seemed to me to lie altogether in an incessant droop of feature, including the eyelids and the hair of the head—if that is a feature. It did not appear as if he made this drooping or relaxed expression, the expression seemed to make itself. But, unluckily, the eyes were hard, small in the circle, of a cold neutral grey, and intently set under the brows. It is quite conceivable that Saint Dominic had a face like Mr. Foat's, and I have seen the same cast of countenance in a few sincerely laborious philanthropic people. The characters of such people I may or may not have had much opportunity of testing or scrutinizing, but I have always found them implacable. Whatever appears wrong to them in another assumes the shape of a personal injury in their own minds; and their displeasure at errors of conduct, whether in strangers or intimates, becomes a serious, pious, self-cherishing revenge.

Now, poor, mean-souled, sordid Mr. Foat was not a hypocrite, and it seems a great shame of me to write thus of an esteemed member of the Zoar chapel connection, active in "every good work:" one of the Collectors and Visiting Referees of the Declining Christians' Asylum; and, indeed, a man of whom I knew very little that I considered wrong. Not only was he thought highly of in our Zion; the little shop which he rented in the village was of a kind which particularly suggests the amenities and cheerful things of life. That he had money in reserve was pretty well understood, and what he did with it was not wholly a secret; but, to judge from the appearance he made in the commerce of the village, he neither had, nor cared to have, a pound in advance of his needs. He was never communicative on the subject of his resources, however, and would always accept, as if it represented the fact, any allusion to the small figure which his little shop cut among even the small shops of the village. So deep, indeed, was his humility, that he seemed to think even good English too good for him: he always affected a loose, ungrammatical mode of speech, as more becoming his "low estate." In order, however, to show his consciousness of what was due to accuracy, he would sometimes fling in a "were" in the wrong place, with a delicacy of intonation which at once advertised the listener that he

considered the plural form a *recherché* thing—like a choice claret, or the badge of the garter, or anything else that is honorary, but for state occasions only or chiefly.

Mr. Foat kept a toyshop. Mingled with the toys—harmless flaxen-headed dolls, and humming-tops, and variegated balls, and painted popguns—were equally innocent farthing and halfpenny children's books, and bottles of sweetstuffs, not perhaps quite as harmless. The keeping of a toyshop is, it must be allowed, a peculiarly gentle occupation for a stout-built widower of five-and-forty, with a slender little daughter of seven or eight, no more like him than any wool-headed little wooden puppy-dog among the toys; and it was a study to see Foat serving out barley sugar or battledores to his young customers. Between him and Cherry there was war. Like too many other mild people he was fond of giving advice which too much resembled dictation, and Cherry was, to put it no higher, a girl upon whom *advice* was lost.

"Oh, Mr. Foat," said Cherry, bouncing in one day, "I want Baron Munchausen, please,"—and she flung down her penny.

With ineffable blandness, Mr. Foat made answer—

"I think, my dear, your mother would rayther you laid out your money in something different—something more instructive; the Dairyman's Daughter is very interesting."

So saying, he leaned forward with outspread flattened hands on the counter, beaming down on Cherry like her better angel, divinely commissioned to warn her of the wickedness of Baron Munchausen. A flash of humour passed over Cherry's face in a moment; she was older than she looked, and Foat was too self-involved to suspect anything of this gauche rough girl, with her hair anyhow, and a pair of large eyes, in whose lambency of motion he could see nothing particular.

"Lor!" said Cherry, "do you keep religious books as well? Do let me have a look!"

The enchanted Foat immediately produced three good thick packets of children's tracts, in thin tissue covers of all colours, chiefly *mauve*, and deposited them before Cherry on the counter, for her inspection.

"There, you see, miss; let's see if we can find you a *nice* Dairyman's Daughter," said he, beginning to untie the books, and run them through one by one.

"Why, Mr. Foat," says Cherry, "what makes religious books have *mauve* covers always?"

"It isn't the cover," said Foat, with soft displeasure in his tones, "it's the inside as brings a blessing with it."

"Lor, yes," replied Cherry, with extreme gravity, taking up one of the little thin tracts, and leaning against the counter, as she held it open at the middle where it was sewn—"I like these books! This is beautiful:—'Little Mary was now three years and a-half old. Such was the work of grace in her heart that her kind parents now seldom found it necessary to use the rod. Many a time she was known to creep alone into the bedroom, where she was overheard to engage in supplication with sobs and tears. But in a

short time, she had a very serious illness.* Oh, that *is* beautiful, Mr. Foat! Let me see some more, if you've got 'em!"

"A ha'porth of toffee," interposed a little voice,—that of a greedy-looking boy.

"Don't keep toffee, my dear," said Foat,—"hardbake?"

"I wants toffee," replied the child, and left the shop: but only to hang loitering and doubting round the window.

After this interruption Foat and Cherry resumed their studies.

"Here's a nice one!" said Foat, in his most insinuating manner; "it's out of Janeway's Token. I put my Fanny to bed at three o'clock yesterday afternoon because she went to sleep over it."

"Oh, *do* let's see *that*," eagerly exclaimed Cherry.

"Ah, I wish my Fanny was like you, miss," responded Foat; "this is hever so much before Munchausen."

And so the game went on, till the fascinated shopkeeper began to grow a little weary, in spite of Cherry's enthusiasm for "religious books."

"Couldn't you bring your mind to fix on one of these three?" said he, at last, spreading three of the small mauve-coloured tracts out with his fingers.

"N—n—o," said Cherry, with languor, cocking her head reflectively, "I think I'll take—Baron Munchausen. He's more spiritual. . . . N—n—o, I won't, I won't have any this morning. . . . I aint made up my mind." . . . And, so saying, Cherry made good her departure, leaving Mr. Foat with a countenance in which the guardian-angel expression was scarcely so obtrusively visible as it had been five minutes before. Indeed, he glanced angrily at one of the toy-whips hanging up on the wall of the little shop, alongside of the bright tin rattles.

Even a toy-whip is capable of inflicting a good deal of pain; a strapping youngster likes a well-twisted thong, and the toy-makers provide it for him.

It was some time after this, early in the morning, that Cherry, passing by the shop of Mr. Foat at a little before nine, saw a group of children gathered in a *pose* of attention round the door. There was nobody behind the counter, and it was impossible to see much through the long, decorous, white curtain which sheltered the small parlour from the scrutiny of the customers; but Cherry heard little half-suppressed cries of pain, which made her open her mouth and draw her breath faster than usual. They sounded like the cries of a child who was trying to stifle its complaints, either from a sense of shame, or because it was being threatened with something worse than it was already suffering if it made a noise.

Cherry had quick ears, and she certainly fancied she distinguished another voice, not that of a child, and not pleasant to listen to—a voice with a chilly, soft, merciless rhythm in it, repeating a demand that was not complied with. But the little stifled shrieks went on, and at last came an apparently irrepressible—

"Oh, *don't*, father, pray!"

This was too much for Cherry. The blood rose to her very ears; she

* See a horrible little child's tract, entitled—"Memoir of Mary Scott." Birmingham, C. Caswell, 135 Broad Street.

flew into the shop, dashed open the decorous parlour door, in spite of an effort made from the inside, only too late, to keep it closed, and stood, flaming and contemptuous, with her bonnet flying back over her neck, before the mild-looking Mr. Foat. He looked milder than ever—except that his eyelids straightened in their droop.

"Aint you ashamed of yourself, you nasty, cruel—muckworm?" cried Cherry, pausing half a second for an epithet, and hitting, as she so often did, upon an inappropriate one. Mr. Foat did not particularly resemble a worm.

"Oh, don't, don't, don't, miss!" sobbed out little Fan, hurrying on her knees up to Cherry, and sobbing at her skirts; "go away, go away, go away!"

Mr. Foat, never eloquent or apt at repartee, was now nearly dumb; he looked as silly as a child caught at the jam-pot.

"You hear what she says?" he gasped out, gently; "you hear? Go away! Fanny, my dear child, come here!"

"Come here!" screamed out Cherry, losing all command of herself, and making a desperate clutch at Fanny, who had only her little night-shirt on. "Come here, indeed, you wretch!" proceeded Cherry. "What do you call *this*?"

Now Cherry had caught sight of a red streak on the child's little neck, and also of a whip which Mr. Foat had flung under the table. With sublime indecorum, holding Fan with a mighty grip, she snatched her night-dress clean up to the shoulders, and said to the bewildered, enfeebled Foat,

"Look at the wales on that child's body—a delicate child like that, too! What do you call that?"

"I call it a father's care for his child's immortal soul, miss. Not as you've a right to be in my parlour, and you will please to go; and I shall inform your mother of your conduct."

While this was going on inside the little parlour, you may be sure the public in pinafores outside the shop had not grown any smaller. One of the new-comers suddenly raised the cry of "Here's Teacher!" and so there was. Teacher was on his way to town, grave, and looking straight before him as usual; but he could not resist the appeals of the little people.

"Oh, teacher, here's a murder!"

"And Cherry White's gone into Mr. Foat's parlour!"

"Oh, there's been such screaming, teacher, there has!"

Teacher would have been more or less than human if, after this, he had passed indifferent on. All the thoughts that struggled rapidly through his mind we need not try to guess; but he soon made a fourth inside the little parlour of the guilty Foat. It is true he had the good manners to tap on the panel; but he turned the latch at the same moment, and stood, tall, gaunt, solemn before them all. The first thing he did was, as usual, when there was a difficulty before him, to run his hand through his hair, so as to make it all stand up on end. Cherry went so far, at a later period, as to assert that "it was like flaming, fiery swords" on that occasion.

"Good morning, Mr. Woods," said Mr. Foat, as mildly as ever, but with

an accent of pious courage, and that he felt reinforced by the presence of a brother. "Good morning," said Woods, in his usual deep, quiet voice, with its invariable rising inflection; but turning to Cherry rather than addressing Foat. Of course Woods had seized at a glance the true relations of all the persons present. You often read in novels of people who are too stupid to see obvious things, but in real life human beings are quick to understand, and nineteen twentieths of the tragical misunderstandings which occur in plays and story books are simply impossible.

Cherry, confronted by this grave, inflexible man, felt as if she must sink into the earth. He seemed to be always turning up in her path, and always when she was in a difficulty.

"What's the matter?" said he, addressing her, with a kind half-smile. "My time's short, ye know; I'm away to beezness."

"Look here!" burst out Cherry, breaking down in tears, and at the same time uncovering the little girl's back again; but this time untying the string at the neck, and letting the night-dress fall to the thin wheeled flanks. "That's the matter," said Cherry; "and if I was a man, I'd . . . I'd . . . shake Mr. Foat till he couldn't see out of his wicked old eyes!" And then another burst of tears. Mr. Foat lifting his hands, and beaming out with a great sacred serenity; but looking rather foolish for all that.

It was plainly incumbent upon Mr. Woods to make an end of this scene, and he began his difficult task by saying in a half-whisper to Cherry—

"Haden't ye better go home? I can see to the child here. Will ye trust me?"

This was very flattering and very soothing to poor Cherry. It flattered—I was going to say her pride, only it was something infinitely better than pride that was touched in her young bosom—it flattered her, then, to be spoken to as if she had any trust to delegate; and there was always something calming and comforting in the manner of Woods. She turned her large eyes upon the Teacher, wet and soft with tears as they were, and, allowing Fan to slip away, gave him her hand to shake, and disappeared through the parlour-door into the shop.

As for the questioning that awaited her in the street, and in her walks about the village, you never got anything out of Tomboy in the way of scandal. As she came out at the door of that temple of innocence, Mr. Foat's toyshop, she ran against Amelia Luckin.

"Why don't you wait for Mr. Woods, Cherry?" drawled Amelia.

"Walk to town with him yourself!" said Cherry, whose eyes were yet dim with tears—indeed, she did not notice the glint of rapid anger in Amelia's eyes as she said this, and she passed on, and was soon cheerfully absorbed in those cares of a mother with which Timothy filled up so much of her time. But Amelia loitered about the village all the morning, so that as their early dinner-time approached, her mother grew anxious about her. A little before twelve o'clock Amelia thought proper to come home.

"Now then, 'Melia, 'Melia, 'Melia!"

Mrs. Luckin, standing at the shop-door, sent forth this cry in her most

affectionate and musical tones: there she stood, with one arm akimbo, and shading her eyes from the sun with the other as she looked down the street after the precious 'Melia, who might be perceived in the dusty distance by eyes less quick than a mother's, munching something more substantial than delicate, and looking as if she had just lunched on mischief.

"Now then, 'Melia dear," said her mother, a little sharply, as her daughter drew slowly nigher, "come in to dinner, do, child!"

"I shan't," answered Amelia; but making straight for the shop all the while: "I don't want any dinner."

This was a stroke of humour which was familiar to the happy mother, and, having made provision for the worst in the shape of a dozen "sad" dumplings, besides the "hash," she could afford to reply with her accustomed indulgence—

"Oh, naughty, naughty 'Melia! The black man will come for little girls that say they don't want any dinner. It's very wicked not to want dinner, and when there's traycle with the pudd'n, for shame."

By this time Amelia had reached the shop-door, and was received with open arms by her mother, who "touzled" her upon her bosom for a moment or two, and then led her, or rather encouraged, patted, or coaxed her into the parlour behind the shop. Amelia feigning reluctance all the way.

In every village there is a Public Idiot and a Public Epilept. There may be two or three naturals in the population, and two or three boys or girls who have fits; but there is sure to be one girl or boy whose fits are matter of publicity, so that the people say to a stranger (if it is a girl), "There, she has fits." Amelia had fits. She was a fat, stumpy, pudding-headed girl, with coarse large eyebrows, and gloomy eyes, that never had the light of pity in them. If it had not been that there *must* be something of the grace of youth in the young, she would have been a wholly repulsive object. Though her bust was strongly marked, she had, in other respects, the appearance of a child, and certainly did not look older than eleven, even with her pinafore off, and she usually wore one. But her small malignities were the terror of the village. If she could find a chance of upsetting a cradle with a baby in it—or twisting a child's finger backwards—or tearing a strip of diachylon plaster off a cut—or turning out a chest of drawers pellmell upon the floor—she was happy, supposing she could make use of the opportunity.

In the afternoon of the day, Cherry had occasion to go to the little general shop for some domestic trifle.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Luckin, "what's up at Foat's? I understand he hit you with a cart-whip, but I don't see no place. Where was it he struck you?"

"Now, Mrs. Luckin," says Cherry, with entire good humour, but unassailable reticence, "if you're going to pump me, you'll have to mend your sucker."

"Ah, my gal, I know you're a deep 'un. You're a honourable one, too; that's what you are. You always keep a secret."

"Mrs. Luckin, how can you talk so? I never have any secrets; because I never think of whether I ought to tell a thing, or whether I oughtn't."

"Now, Cherry, that beats everything! Why don't you tell things, then? What makes you keep things to yourself?"

"I don't. Things keep to me. And why shouldn't they?"

Just at that moment Amelia was visible to Cherry, just above the little white muslin parlour curtains. She was flattening her nose, and looking as wicked as anything human could look. Cherry felt sure she had been listening, and then the door opened, and 'Melie said, in her hateful drawl—

"Mother! ha' you asked her yet whether it's true as she kissed Mr. Woods the night when there was the magic lantern at the schoolroom, and we was all in darkness?"

X.

For all Tomboy's notion, not very ill founded, that Mrs. Branch was not one to care for the beauties of nature, she did not fail to go and see her again directly, and take her some more flowers. It was night; the little shop was closed, and Mrs. Branch, very much better, was doing some plain needlework in her small back parlour. Her quiet, but not weak face, with its odd ornament of tortoiseshell spectacles, was not an unpleasant study. You must know she wore a cap, and had a bold beautiful nose, and a large mouth full of sensibility and kindness. Cherry had taste, but was reckless of appearances. Mrs. Branch never made an appearance, or consulted people's fancies, just because she had no instinct which made any distinction for her between what was ugly and what was pretty. When her boy Thomas, just before he went to sea again, made her a present of a new Bible, she carried it to chapel regularly every Sunday, with a brown paper cover on it, to preserve the binding.

"Won't you take off your things, my dear?" said she to Cherry, on this occasion.

"Lor, no, Mrs. Branch; I've only looked in to see how you are, you know. You seem rather dull."

"Do I, dear? I don't *feel* dull. I'm wonderfully sustained. 'As thy day, so shall thy strength be.'"

"Well, I don't know about sustained; but you seem to me dull. I shall sing something."

It would, perhaps, be wrong to say Cherry was proud of her voice; but surely she delighted in it. People often accuse others of pride in their work when they are only rejoicing in it.

"Sing? bless the girl!" said Mrs. Branch, looking up, and biting the end off her thread. Cherry began, as innocent as a bird in a covert, quite as earnestly intent on what she was doing, and without a scrap of self-consciousness,

"'Glory to thee, my God, this night;'"

and having done that, a little abbreviated it is true, turned to Mrs. Branch with—

"There! I knew you wouldn't like a *song*."

"Well, child, there are some songs, or used to be, that I don't know there's any harm in. There was the 'Lass of Richmond Hill,'—that was a

favourite song when I was little—it was about King George the Third and Miss Thingamytob."

"Well, you shall have something betwixt and between. I don't know the 'Lass of Richmond Hill,' but I'll sing a 'Christmas Carol,' because it isn't Christmas."

"Dear me, how merry you are!" said Mrs. Branch, with a sigh, looking up at Tomboy, who had already begun the carol.

Now Mrs. Branch had little sensibility to music as tune, but the vibrations of a fine voice moved her, as they do other unmusical people, and Cherry saw that her eyelids were tremulous, and her lips, and that two great drops were ready to trickle down the cheeks. So she finished off with the Doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," to the Old Hundredth.

"Now, Mrs. Branch," said she, "it's *your* turn."

"Me sing, my dear? You're making game of me."

"No, I aint; you *shall* sing!"

"I'm sure I can't, Cherry. But here's a hymn-book, and you can borrow it if you like."

As Cherry opened the book, her abundant bright hair fell down in a wave from one side of her bonnet; and, as she lifted her shapely arm to tuck it in again, Mrs. Branch got a sense of warm youthful life and health, which did her good, though she hardly knew it. But she soon had fresh reason to think Tomboy was very "unsanctified."

"Ha, ha!" she cried, clapping her hands, "do you call this rhyme, Mrs. Branch? Look here!

'Here I raise my Ebenezer,
Hither by thine help I'm come,
And I hope in thy good pleasure
Safely to arrive at home.'

Do you call Ebenezer and pleasure rhymes?"

"My dear," said Mrs. Branch, "I haven't got much head-knowledge; you're cleverer than I am; but that's the experience of every one that has tasted——" and then she stopped, shaking her head.

Cherry resolved to change the subject.

"How is Mr. Woods?" said she; "I think he isn't quite such a guy as he used to be."

Mrs. Branch looked up inquiringly. "I'm sure, my child, he's just the same as ever." This "guy" was another "unsanctified" allusion. There was a minute's silence.

"I wish, Cherry," resumed Mrs. Branch, "I often wish I could see some signs of a work of grace in your heart."

"I try to be good," said Cherry, with the faintest approach to a pout, "and I believe in our Saviour as much as you do."

Mrs. Branch had seen the pout, and now, putting up a silent prayer, laid down her needlework, and leaned forward towards Cherry, with both arms on the table, saying—

"My dear, have you been led to feel yourself a sinner? Your own goodness is as filthy rags."

"You talk as if I was very wicked, Mrs. Branch; and mother's always at me about it. I'm sure I don't mean to do wicked things."

"When we are in darkness, child, *all* we do is wickedness."

"Do you mean to tell me I was wicked when I took to Timothy?"

"My dear, did you do it as unto the Lord, or as unto men?"

Cherry paused for two or three seconds; at last she answered with decision—

"Neither. My heart——"

"Oh, child! the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Out of the heart proceed murders——"

"Now don't go on like that, you frighten me! Of course, when I'm saucy to mother, or when I slap Timothy because I'm cross, or anything of that, I remember it when I say 'our trespasses,' and I think of our Saviour—suffered under Pontius Pilate was crucified dead and buried the third day he rose again."

Mrs. Branch shook her head, and resumed her work. After a pause she spoke again.

"If ever I should see you brought to the light, Cherry, I think you'd be the child of many prayers."

Again there was silence. This time it was Cherry who spoke first.

"I think, Mrs. Branch, if I was a Cumbersome Christian like you, I should never get married."

Mrs. Branch again shook her head; and murmured, half to herself, half to Cherry—"Be ye not unequally yoked together."

' Chosen Jews
Must not use
Woollen mixed with linen.' "

Cherry looked at the old lady with blank wonder. "What does that mean?" said she.

"That comes from 'Hart's Hymns,' child," said Mrs. Branch, drawing the thread through her lips. "Hark, there's a knock at the door!"

"There, now, how pale you're turned; you're always thinking of that shabby man and the umbrella; but it isn't him, you may depend upon it."

"No, my dear; it's Woods's knock, I know; but any knock at the door gives me a turn over like, since that night."

The remainder of the story of the evening in Mrs. Branch's back parlour may be gathered from another extract from Tomboy's Diary.

" . . . Mr. Woods dropped his hat as he came in. Suppose he should be paying his addresses to Mrs. Branch. He said he had heard me singing. I presume he would not come in at once, but waited outside because he thought I should be going away, and then he could see Mrs. Branch all alone. Mrs. Branch asked me how old I was. I could hardly remember; and then she seemed almost vexed that I was so old."

A VISIT TO A PASHA.

THERE are few sea-coast scenes more beautiful than that presented by the bay of Beyrout to the traveller coming from the North. The coasting steamer has brought him past scene after scene of interest; the steep mountain range that encloses the little plain of Alexandretta, the groves of fig and olive which make Latakieh an oasis in the surrounding barrenness, and Lebanon overlooking the mediæval citadel of Tripoli; but the beauties of Beyrout surpass not only all of these, but perhaps the much-vaunted Naples itself.

It was early morning when we arrived there, and the mists were still clinging to the heights of Lebanon, rising tier upon tier beyond the town and port, which, in accordance with its character as an important place in the Levant, has a certain dignity and business-like look which no place since Smyrna had at all presented to our eyes. It occupies the end of a promontory of flat ground intervening between the mountain range and the sea; beyond its white houses and minarets lies a mass of green, formed by the gardens of villas and a pine forest; further back the vegetation is lifted up, as it were, on to the mountain, till at last it dies away, and the white peaks of Lebanon stand out against the sky.

We landed with the usual difficulty and the usual loss of temper caused by the officiousness of the Arabian character, and the peculiar imitating pitch of their voices, and succeeded in saving ourselves and our effects from these fiends, and getting in safety to the locanda, which was comfortable enough and spotlessly clean. It was then necessary to take counsel as to what was to be the principal feature in the visit to Beyrout—a ride into the mountain as far as the palace of Bdeddin, the residence of the Turkish Governor, Daoud Pasha, then recently appointed to be a moderator between Druse, Moslem, and Maronite, and to scatter oil on the still troubled waters of religious politics on the mountain. The Pasha was himself a Christian, a member of the Neo-Ottoman or Turko-Parisian school of manners. He had been in England; and had generally the reputation not only for talent and culture, but of being a link between the Western and Eastern idea. The first Christian intrusted by the Porte with a cure of Giaours would alone be an interesting object, had not the attraction been added of visiting the spot on which the blood of the massacres of 1860 was hardly dry; itself combining the situation of La Chartreuse with the most thorough Orientalism—the palace of the Genius of the Mountain.

After a hurried breakfast we started for the interior, and having left the town, followed a wide sandy road between fierce-looking hedges of prickly pear, which most thoroughly answer all the purposes broken glass serves on the top of an English wall, keeping sacred the gardens of the Bey-routines. Then we galloped through the pine forest, which somewhat resembles that near Ravenna, and on to the foot of the mountain. Here a tolerably hard paved horsetrack, which has many brethren in Switzerland and the Tyrol, led us winding among the terraces with which the sides of the hill are everywhere covered. This is a very favoured corner of Syria, and

on visiting Judæa, the contrast shows all the more powerfully the deep desolation of that country, which once was as rich as this. Everything hereabouts looked prosperous and smiling. The gardens were full of fig, orange, olive, and apricot trees; the villages clung to the mountain side, and peeped out amongst the rich vegetation as they do in Italy. The villas of the wealthy merchants filled up the choicest spots. The dead and dreary East seemed banished, and we appeared to have reached some glorified country which combined Oriental luxuriance and Western trimness; while the view back over the town and Mediterranean made an exquisite finish to the picture. But the scenery soon got sterner as we turned in among the hills and left civilization behind. After touching the summit of the pass, we descended into a deep valley and crossed over a torrent; then ascended again a long weary mount in the twilight, and came to Din al Karne. This village was the principal scene of the massacre, and lies over against the Governor's palace. We tumbled through the town, which seemed quite deserted, and then essayed to reach the castle, the lights of which we descried high up over against us. This was not so easy; and as the night was pitch-dark we lost the path, and on finding ourselves among a mass of loose stones had to dismount and lead our horses down what was probably the bed of a torrent: we scrambled down somehow, and at last found the path which was to lead us to Bdeddin.

We reached the castle, and passed through a vast court-yard, evidently tenanted by the Turkish body-guard, judging from the number of white-breeched, red-fez-wearing soldiery to be seen in all directions. At the gate at the further end we dismounted and sent our credentials, letters from friends known to the Pasha when Daoud Effendi in former years in England. The result was a summons to follow the messenger, and we passed through a paved quadrangle, which seemed wonderfully Arabian-Night-like in the darkness, with its flowerbeds and splashing fountains, into the presence of the great man. Dinner had just been concluded, and the party we found were in enjoyment of coffee and cigarettes. The Governor was seated on a kind of throne at the end of the hall, while the suite, with whom he seemed on the most genial footing, were ranged on divans along the walls. We were most courteously received, questions were put as to the well-being of the authors of our letters of introduction; and then the conversation, which out of compliment to us had been till now conducted in somewhat painful English, relapsed into its normal French, and became general. The hospitable Man of the Mountain soon found out that we had not dined: a clap of the hand summoned two attendants, who seemed to have been lurking at the further end of the room: they received their orders with profound obeisances, and led us away to a plentiful repast, which seemed to make instantaneous appearance at the will of our host without the necessity of previous preparation. It was composed chiefly of vegetables, dressed in every variety of way, and which accompanied by some of the wine of the country, was excellent, though the presence of a considerable number of attendants closely inspecting our proceedings, is somewhat trying to the British mind, however necessary to the Oriental. On returning to the reception-hall we entered the tobacco parliament which was being held there,

and took part in a very interesting discussion on the state of the country. We gathered therefrom that Daoud's rule is on the whole successful, and that the peace between the contending religionists is being better preserved than it has ever been hitherto. The Pasha's faith, he being an Armenian in communion with the Eastern church, makes him at least more welcome to the Maronites, although they are of the Roman persuasion, than a Moslem would be, while the Druses and Mahomedans respect him as the delegate of the Commander of the Faithful. But the post is no sinecure, and the most delicate tact is necessary to keep the equilibrium; for the smouldering enmities that broke into so terrible a storm in 1860 have become thereby tenfold increased, and the contempt shown by the non-Christian population to the Maronites nourishes the desire of revenge in the latter. The Governor is almost constantly on tour through his pashalik, administering justice in person, and trying to understand the peculiarities of his subjects. We prolonged our sitting till late in the night, and then we were shown to our quarters in the outer quadrangle. Nothing could surpass in grandeur the view from the window which looked over the gorge, for the castle is built on the edge of a precipitous rock; it opened to the floor, and was innocent of glass, being merely closed by a shutter of wood, and certainly suggestive of unpleasant results in the case of somnambulism. The moon lighted up the scene with that intensely white brilliancy which she has in these climes, showing the steep wooded hills towering on either side above the castle; and the air was musical with watercourses, which seemed to be flowing from all sides to join the river in the valley below. We could not help thinking of the hideous tragedy of which this very castle and this very court-yard were the scene, and in which after so many comforts one was lying down to sleep so peacefully. Here the foulest treachery was perpetrated; here crowds of Christians from the country round, and especially from the then flourishing town of Din al Karne, attracted by promises of protection, had gathered. The condition of safety was to be the surrender of their arms. These were piled in a heap in the centre of the court-yard, and the defenceless host returned to their wives and children secure in the prospect of immunity. But the blackest treason, too black it might be thought even for Oriental cruelty, awaited them. At a given signal the armed Druses and the Turkish soldiery, hounded on by a modern Jezebel in the form of the widow of the principal Druse sheik, fell upon them, and the carnage did not cease while one remained alive. It is no wonder accordingly that there are memories and ghosts haunting Lebanon which Daoud Pasha finds it difficult to exorcise.

We rose early under the influence of the novelty of our surroundings and the bright sun which streamed through our unglazed casements, and went out to examine the palace by daylight. Certainly our enchanted castle had lost some of its mystery and beauty; and like most Eastern splendours in the present day, had an element of shallowness about it. The arabesques on the walls were faded and peeling, doors were unhinged, pavements broken. The whole had a faded aspect, and suggested manifold discomforts in the winter season, which is often severe on the mountain. At half-past ten we were called to a *déjeuner à la fourchette*, whereat we met the Pasha and our companions of the

night before, as well as his chaplain and secretary. Conversation ran principally on Europe and the comforts of matter-of-fact civilization which the ruler of Lebanon seems to appreciate in the midst of the somewhat rococo magnificence which surrounded him at Bdeddin, and with which the plentiful breakfast, thoroughly French in its character, was by no means incongruous. Our host, when it was finished, adjourned to his private room with his secretary to transact business, and left us to mature our plans for a return to Beyrout and look over a file of French newspapers. Soon after midday we took leave of our kind entertainer, who seemed almost hurt at the shortness of our stay. He desired to carry us on a judicial progress he was about to make through his pashalik; but we turned our horses' heads towards the coast. We had a glorious ride back through the mountain, the scenery increasing in rich beauty as Beyrout was approached, and we deeply enjoyed the sight of the cloudless sun sinking into the Mediterranean as we topped the last ridge of Lebanon. The wide prospect beneath us—the wooded and highly tilled slopes of the mountains, studded with villas and kiosques, the dull green of the pine-wood on the promontory, the buildings of the town on the sea-margin, and the long waving line of the coast towards the Dog River—was dimmed by a lustrous mist which cleared for a moment as the sun sank, and left every object in the wide prospect clear and distinct, to be suddenly blotted out by night coming up from the sea. But we had no time to ponder over the new and magical effect of the close of day in the regions of Orient, but had to hasten to find the new French high-road from Beyrout to Damascus, and so to get back to our locanda before being utterly benighted.

ASHLEY CARR GLYN.

THE FOUNTAIN OF GUINGAMP.

HANDSOME young Louis the Fifteenth was fast changing into a middle-aged spectacle contemned of gods and men, when in the year 1743 the good people of Guingamp, in Brittany, resolved to rebuild the fountain of their market-place. This fountain was then nigh upon three hundred years old, having been originally constructed by Duc Pierre, the husband of St. Françoise d'Amboise. Pierre was an unstable sort of character, and he treated his angelic wife much as the Marquis treated Griselda. It might indeed be supposed that he had read, in his boyhood, the first edition of Chaucer, and had resolved to enact on his own account that celebrated conjugal drama, for, like the Marquis Walter, he seemed to think her sweet bearing was—

“—— of som subtiltee

And of malice, or for cruel corage

That she had suffered this with sad visage;”

and he behaved so shamefully, in his fits of causeless jealousy, that angry Breton barons, who came from right and left to remonstrate with him, might well inquire—

"What could a sturdy husband more devise
To prove hire wifhood, and hire stedfastnesse,
And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?"

But there came a day when Duc Pierre repented, and having brought his wife to the verge of the grave by his violence, grace touched his heart; and he fell on his knees by her bedside, with tears in his eyes and prayer on his lips. Then of course Françoise instantly forgave him, and embraced him, saying, "Monseigneur, mon amy, je vous le pardonne de bon cœur, ne pleurez plus, car je sçais bien que cette malice n'est point venue de vous, mais de l'ennemy de nature, qui est envieux de nostre bien et de la félicité à laquelle nous tendons." And thereafter Duc Pierre was really a changed man (it is particularly specified that he got up at four o'clock every morning), and, like Chaucer's couple—

"Ful many a yere in high prosperitee
Liven these two in concord and in rest;"

and not only so, but he aided his pious duchess in her good works, and among other benefactions to the town of Guingamp, where they dwelt in a "little castle," he built this fountain, bringing the water in pipes from a neighbouring hill, through a street which was from thence called *la rue de la Pompe*.

And this fountain, having been frequently mended up, and having cost the town (according to the public accounts) *quinze sous* in 1464 for soldering the pipes, *cinq sous* in 1465 in compensation for injury done by laying said pipes, again twenty crowns (by subscription of twenty rich burgesses) to further repairs of the conduit, and one hundred crowns in 1588 (which the mayor borrowed of the Abbot of St. Croix) for the reconstruction of the monument itself, and for repurchasing an angel of stone, which had somehow strayed into the possession of one Widow René Rocancour, was now, in 1743, no longer mendable. And therefore the town council resolved to have a new *Pompe*, to bring the water from the hill of Montbareil on a long aqueduct, and to pay good hard money for a new basin and ornaments. The sum which they made up their minds to produce from the official purse does not seem large to our modern ears—*quinze cent livres*, sixty pounds in modern reckoning; but in Brittany, one hundred and twenty-three years ago, it could not have been shabby, for Guingamp was and is a substantial little town, with a history and a reputation to sustain. To this end they made a bargain, registered on the 28th of December, with Corlay, the celebrated sculptor of Châteaulandron. Bred a carpenter, Corlay, in handling the tools, had discovered that he was born an artist; and as he was a local genius, whose fame had, as it were, grown up under the very eyes of the burgesses of Guingamp (from which Châteaulandron was not above four leagues distant), it is much to their credit that they believed in the prophet of their own country. The result amply justified their choice. The reader is therefore requested to transport his spiritual vision to Châteaulandron, a small town on the river Leff, to a house built with fantastic gable ends, and ornamented at the angle of each wall with little wooden figures, and to a low ceiled room, where a person having the marked physiognomy of the extreme north-west of France—a dark-eyed man clad in a complete suit of black velvet—sat before a portfolio of drawings under the light of an oil lamp. Those were days when gentlemen of degree wore immense periwigs, and the

most famous sculptor of Brittany might reasonably have adopted fashionable costume; but Corlay wore his own long black hair parted down the middle, *après la mode de Bretagne*; he was unashamed of his peasant birth, and his handsome garments were cut after the old pattern, a short vest and immensely full breeches gathered to the knee, while the wide flapping hat, which lay on the table beside him, was of the shape which may yet be seen in the market of Quimper or at the Pardon of Ploermel.

As Corlay turned over the loose leaves and innumerable scraps of paper which accumulate in an artist's portfolio, the most beautiful Gothic designs



were lit up one after another. Most of them were sketches taken in the towns of his native province; here a tower in the pure simple ogival, there a chapel blossoming with the fantastic wealth of the renaissance. There were *calvaires*, each rich with a population of sacred personages, and bits of streets and markets fringed with gable ends, beneath which the deep doorways seemed purposely retreating into shadow to veil the romantic histories within. One lovely drawing showed a strong stone turret embroidered with fine patterns, dating perhaps from *François premier*, or earlier, and now garlanded with a brilliant creeper rooted in the court below; and there were also many statues,

as of blessed Charles de Blois, clad in armour as when he fell at Auray, and of the meek matron St Françoise d'Amboise. But none of these drawings seemed to be exactly what Corlay wanted, and at last he rose, and taking up his large circular hat, he sallied forth into the moonshine.

In the early part of the last century the towns of Brittany were untouched by the hand of the spoiler. No convenient but destructive road of iron had linked them with the throbbing heart of France. The gable-ended houses cut sharply against the starry sky; their angles broken by carved figures of saint and hero, and their sides covered with scaly slates, as though "mermen bold" had come from La Manche and Morbihan to advise in their construction. Here and there, where the upper storeys overhung very much, the narrow way was plunged in absolute darkness; but the little statues on the gables overhead stood out like silver in the moonshine. Corlay passed through Châteaulandron till he came quite outside the town on the western suburb, to a low stone house whose roof hardly overtopped the walled garden. The month was October, and he could see the apples glistening here and there on the trees, and hear the chill breezes whispering in a tall poplar behind the house. He knocked sharply at the garden door, which, after a cautious glance through a small barred aperture, was opened by a stout serving girl in full Breton costume; her high white cap shone like snow in the moonlight, as Corlay traversed the garden, where the late roses hung their heads in anticipation of frost, while the leaves crackling under his feet bore witness that

"The melancholy days were come, the saddest of the year,
Of naked woods and wailing winds, and meadows brown and sere,"

or rather that those days were approaching rapidly; for there were still a few lingering flowers, and on the morrow would gleam a few warm sunbeams, strangely typical of the home life within that old house.

Corlay, who was a tall man, stooped as he passed under the low arch of the doorway which admitted him into a square panelled hall. It was perfectly plain; neither weapons of warfare nor spoils of the chase adorned its walls, nor, which was more remarkable, were there to be seen any of those portraits in pastille or in oil in which the French of the upper class so much delighted. The only ornaments were two palms crossed above the fireplace, artificially wrought of straw, such indeed as are to this day carried in St. Peter's on Palm Sunday. The room on the right, to which Corlay was ushered, was also plain even to bareness. It might easily be divined that this house had no master, and that the two frail female forms bending over their needles were far from rich in worldly goods. They were, nevertheless, not quite alone; by the side of the fire sat an aged priest, clad in the long full gown worn by the Jesuits in those days; he was indeed so old that his person was shrunk, and his face immobile save for the fiery dark eyes of Brittany which gleamed beneath his long white eyebrows.

The mistress of the house rose as Corlay entered, and the light upon the table, between her seat and the door, cast up its faint radiance upon a face it would not have been easy to forget, though it was neither young nor, strictly speaking, beautiful. Her age may have been about fifty, perhaps a little less.

She was dressed in the quaint fashion of Breton widowhood; but the stuff was old and rusty as her features were thin and worn. The hair was white; the eyes, dark and naturally passionate, wore an expression of habitual resignation, over which would sometimes flash a look of fear, as if memory had evoked some terrible scene of which the images could never quite be laid to sleep. On her left hand was a worn wedding ring, absolutely her only ornament if such it could be called. This lady inclined her head to Yves Corlay with the grace of a woman bred in the ranks of the *haute noblesse*; though nought in her surroundings nor in her plebeian name of Madame Moine argued a claim to birth or breeding.

The younger lady, who had been sitting with her back to the door, turned round with an indescribable faint joyousness, and held out both slender hands with an exclamation of welcome. Then it could be seen that she was slightly deformed, and that her face bore that spiritual wistful expression so often seen in connection with this misfortune. Corlay lifted his hat from his broad brows and came forward with a touch of timidity, which showed where lay the strong man's love.

"I salute you, Madame Moine. Mademoiselle, I have the honour to kiss your hands," said the sculptor, with a profound reverence.

"Louise-Marie," said the old priest, in the feeble voice of extreme age, "give me my cloak, my child, the wind blows in from the garden."

Louise-Marie turned quickly and affectionately toward the speaker, wrapped him round in his large cloak, arranged the cushion which supported his feeble head, and showed by the touch of dutiful care in her manner that she had been bred up in great observance toward him. As she moved she coughed slightly. Yves Corlay's anxious eyes followed her every gesture, noted the pallor of her delicate skin, and the weary yet vivacious pose of the little head, with its rolls of black hair. The mother caught his glance, and said,

"It is Louise-Marie's birthday; Père Nicolas has been able to spend it with the child of his adoption. He has known her so long—so long!"

"Three-and-twenty years to-night, my little daughter," said the old man, affectionately—"three-and-twenty years this 25th of October since I baptized you in mortal haste, thinking you would surely die. But you lived! my little Louise-Marie, you lived! And you will say a few prayers now and then over the grave of your old friend for the good service he rendered you three-and-twenty years ago."

Madame Moine shivered from head to foot as she said, half aloud to herself, "And I was not yet four-and-twenty years old!"

Corlay looked up with surprise and sympathy mingled in his eyes. He did not understand whence the pang arose; but Louise-Marie leaning towards him said in almost inaudible whisper, "My poor father, he was dead; yes, he was already dead!"

Corlay was silent; he had never heard this before, and his heart thrilled with sympathy for the mother of the woman he loved. He now comprehended something of the sad domestic drama which bound these three people together; supposing that Père Nicolas had been the spiritual friend of the family before the death of Monsieur Moine. But his acquaintance dated only

two years back, at which period the two ladies had first appeared at Château-landron, and he had asked no questions as to their past. He only knew they had long been resident in Italy and had lately returned to dwell in their native province.

"And with what is our celebrated Maitre Yves now busy?" asked Louise-Marie in her soft voice (Yves Corlay was some twenty years older than herself, and she clung to his society with the enthusiasm of an Italian exile, as she almost might be considered, for her first memories were of Perugia and its glorious company of purple mountains).

"Precisely, mademoiselle, I have come to ask your amiable advice," said Corlay, in the simple French, which was after all with him an acquired language, for he had been born and bred a Breton artisan. He went on—"The mayor and burgesses of Guingamp have resolved to rebuild the fountain in their market-place, originally placed there by Duc Pierre, the husband of the blessed Françoise d'Amboise. The pipes were so old that the community found repairs too costly, and once for all they have fetched water from the hill of Montbareil; and they have brought it on *arches*, mademoiselle, arches which some do say recall to mind the Appian aqueduct!"

Louise-Marie clapped her little hands with mild sarcasm. "As if anything *we* can build could in the least resemble those glorious remnants of ancient Rome." And she shut her eyes and recalled the long sweeps of the Campagna, barred with alternate light and shadows, and the jagged sunny outline of the Sabine hills crowned by the higher Apennine beyond. Her long lashes were dimmed with tears as she said, sweetly,

"And how is the fountain to be built, Maitre Yves? and in what sort of market-place is it to be?"

"The market, mademoiselle, is of a triangular shape, bordered by ancient houses, just like our own. Close by the fountain is a beautiful mountain ash-tree, with scarlet berries at this season of the year, which look charming against the blue sky I can assure you; and just beyond to the east is a mansion with a pointed turret, and beyond that again are the towers and spire of the great church of Notre Dame, all built of solid granite."

"How pretty, Maitre Yves! as pretty, at least, as anything can be in this bleak north."

"Nay, child, do not speak so of the country of your birth," put in Père Nicolas, with a flash in his old eyes which showed that eighty-five years had not dimmed the fervour of the patriot priest.

"What has Brittany given to *me*, father?" said the gentle Louise-Marie, with a touch of irony in her voice. "You and my mother tell me I was born here, but I remember nothing in my infancy but the churches and gardens of my dearest Italy. I remember the ramparts of Perugia, and the angels of Perugino, and the vast miles of the olive and the vine; and of Brittany I know nought but sorrow, mystery, and"—she shuddered—"perhaps disgrace."

Her voice was broken with sharp coughing, and Father Nicolas said eagerly, "Nay, not disgrace, my child, not *that*." While her mother, with a trembling accent, broke in with renewed questions about the great commission with which Corlay had been intrusted.

"I think to make it of a Gothic model," said he, "after the fashion of the cross which Jean de la Bataille long ago put up for the sorrowing English Edward at his town of Northampton. It shall have a slender canopy, and under it a spout from which the clear water shall come brimming down. But I can claim no kindred to-night with Alexander le Imagineur, whose work at Waltham they say mine doth much resemble, for to-night I can frame no details in my mind's eye." And his eye dwelt on Mademoiselle Moine with anxious foreboding.

"Nay," said she, "I can suggest fairer models than any which your French chisellers have wrought in that cold Normandy across the sea. In my own land there is no market-place without its clear jets of water; no great sunny piazza unadorned by broad basins, round whose margins disport sea monsters or river gods. It is the country of the nymph and the naiad. They came thither when Greece became a conquered land, and made the inspiration of a race of artists four hundred years ago. Ah, Perugia, Sienna, Toscanella, Florence, Rome! I see your white walls festooned by the scarlet vine leaves and your campaniles half transparent to the blue sky, and under your unclouded heavens the beautiful uncovered fountains throwing up a million drops of diamonds and pearls."

She stopped, exhausted with her own warmth, and then said, smiling and half ashamed,—*"Bring me our engravings, Maitre Corlay."* And he went obediently to a great oak chest which stood in a corner of the room, fetched out from thence a thick square volume, bound in faded red morocco, with a gilded coronet, and the letters PD emblazoned on one side.

Corlay carried this to the table and placed it under the circle of light, and opened it with a certain tender care. On the blank page was written in a fine upright Italian hand—*"Picteo Doria a son amie. Gènes, 1739;"* and on the fine printed title-page it was set forth in Italian that the book contained engravings of the monuments in the different towns of Italy. They were indeed duplicates of that series by "some of the accomplished predecessors of Piranesi, who were skilled in perspective and architecture, and whose touches were firm and excellent," with which Goethe's father ornamented his ante-room about ten years later; and Corlay turned them over with fingers which lingered affectionately on every page. There was the Mausoleum of Hadrian, whose foundations laid in sunless depths below the Tiber supports such a mighty masonry; there was the Bronze Horse to which Michael Angelo said *"Go on;"* there was the Obelisk on the Pincian Hill, which had lately been dug up from the Gardens of Sallust, and one which had already stood for one hundred and fifty years before the Lateran Basilica, but which was hewn long ere Israel left Egypt. And there were stiff-lined porticoes, done in that black bold style of the early engravers, and the great semicircular sweep of the Piazza of St. Peter's. On this engraving Corlay lingered long, for beside the great Obelisk from the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis, which had been finally placed in the Piazza by the labour of eight hundred men and a hundred and fifty horses, there were the two flashing fountains, one on either hand.

Mademoiselle, however, put out her slender fingers and turned over the leaves impatiently, till she came to the one she sought. It represented a vast

Duomo in an Italian town—a Duomo built of fine brick with ribbed string-courses, but coated on either side of the north door by marble wrought in a delicate diaper pattern. Over against the door was a small but elaborate pulpit, *outside*, so that the preacher could thence address those “standing in the market-place.” From the door, one coming out would descend from a platform thirteen steps into the Piazza, and find himself face to face with the fountain which occupied the foreground of the picture. This was composed of two basins, the upper and lesser supported on tiny pillars. Each basin was many-sided, with small pannels; the lower pannels had each a sacred bas-relief; the upper ones were divided by single figures of personages in Holy Writ. The whole was elevated upon four steps set upon a circular platform, and the water sprang from a centre ornament, and fell back into the upper basin. When the wind blew it would sprinkle the hot pavement of the Piazza far and wide. Underneath was printed “Fontana de Perugia.”

Louise-Marie fixed eager eyes on the sculptor. “This,” said she, “is the first thing that I can remember. Let it be an Italian fountain, Maitre Yves.”

And she seized the chalk which the sculptor mechanically twisted in his hand, and began tracing rough lines upon paper. A slight sketch it was, slight and irregular, but suggesting the fine rounded proportions of Italian art; two large vases below, and surmounted by a figure, around which she struck half curves like jets of water rising and falling.

“But,” said her mother, “what will the good people of a town in Brittany think of an Italian fountain in the midst of the Gothic market-place?”

“They will think it beautiful, mamma, when Maitre Yves has worked out the design; and he will put the figure of the Blessed Virgin at the top instead of the broken angel of stone which he says was placed above the old one; and when I go into Guingamp I shall think I see a fountain in my dear Italy.”

Maitre Yves Corlay proved obedient; he took home Louise-Marie’s little sketch, and he worked out the most beautiful details. The design which he sent in to the burgesses comprised three basins; the lowest was of granite, encircled by a railing of wrought iron; the second was upborne by four sea-horses, the third by four sirens, and ornamented by heads of angels and dolphins; on the summit stood the Mother of Jesus, her feet resting on the crescent; twenty jets of water were represented as enveloping her like a veil. In the faces of the sirens and angels might be caught something of the Breton type; but the whole was “a thing of beauty,” which carried the thoughts irresistibly to scenes of southern life. It was as Louise-Marie had desired.

The bargain for the execution of this fountain was registered on the 28th of December, 1743; you may see it in the archives of Guingamp whenever you happen to pass that way; and in the guide to the town you may read this sentence: “Corlay nous a donné tout simplement un petit chef-d’œuvre de grace, de fantaisie, et d’originalité; rien ne porte là le cachet du dix-huitième siècle; on dirait le caprice d’un Florentin du temps des Médicis.” And now you know how this came to be.

It was two years before the fountain was finished and set up where it

now stands; but Louise-Marie lived to see its completion. Its waters played for the first time in July, 1745, on the night of the great annual *Pardon*, or religious fête of Guingamp. Her mother had brought her into Guingamp, and placed her on a couch at the window of one of the ancient houses overlooking the market. It was a lovely night, as it always is on the night of the *Pardon*. If it rains in the morning, say the peasants, it is sure to be fine in the evening of that first Saturday in July. Yves Corlay walked in the great procession which issued from the portail of Notre Dame as the clock struck nine. Like hundreds of fellow-pilgrims he carried a large torch, and chanted Breton hymns as he walked. He it was who fired the great bonfire in the market, which brought out his new fountain into such wonderful relief, and made the springing water look like fairy jewels. But his heart was sore and heavy even upon this night of triumph; and his lips seemed hardly able to form a prayer, for he had now no hope that heaven would bestow the one gift—Louise-Marie's life. Through the months of early autumn Corlay watched her die; and at the last there came to the sick bed of the Breton maiden two tall young men of Breton blood, of whom he had never heard before—her brothers; and an Italian stranger sent for by Madame Moine; and he too waited patiently and tenderly; but Louise-Marie was chastened by long suffering now, and she grieved the kind sculptor by no open preference of the lover from whom she had been separated so long ago.

When all was over, when the three strangers had disappeared as mysteriously as they had come, and the lonely mother had retired to the Carmelites of Guingamp, Corlay was summoned to another deathbed—that of the venerable Père Nicolas. The old priest was close upon ninety years of age, but his faculties were undimmed; and he told to Corlay the following tale, though at much greater length, adding that it was by Madame Moine's desire:—

In the year 1719 Brittany had been convulsed by a popular rising in defence of rights confiscated by the kings of France, who had only acquired that ancient province as a marriage dower, and who were never looked upon exactly as standing in the shoes of the old dukes. Numerous noble gentlemen were involved; it suffices to name MM. de Guer de Poncallec, de la Boëssière, Lambilly, du Couëdic, de Melac-Henrieux, de Montlouci, the three brothers Talhouët, and the two Polducs, cadets of the Rohans. Of these, four were brought before the Chambre de Nantes on the Tuesday of Holy Week, 1720; and one of the four, M. le Moyne de Talhouët, had voluntarily given himself up, at the instance of his wife, who had been told that this step would insure his safety. They were a young couple, with four little children, and another immediately expected.

Alas! the poor lady was cruelly deceived. The four gentlemen were tried, condemned, and executed in one single day; and the scene at the scaffold at the *Bouffay* was an awful one indeed. Each prisoner was attended by a separate confessor; Père Nicolas walked beside Le Moyne Talhouët.

It was five in the morning when these gentlemen were brought out to die by torchlight.

The whole story is too long and too sad to be recounted here; but Père Nicolas wrote it all out, and his writing has been published. After telling it

to Corlay, however, he asked him to open a secretaire by his bedside, and bring out an old yellow letter, which he unfolded. It was from Madame le Moyne de Talhouët, written in reply to one of his own, telling her of the awful end. A more affecting letter was never penned.

After the birth of her child, which proved to be a girl, the poor young widow left France, as she thought for ever. Père Nicolas sent her to the care of his sister, who was Superior of a convent at Perugia. She lived close to this convent, and brought up her daughter with the greatest difficulty; the child suffered from the grievous anguish her mother had endured previous to her birth. Two sons entered the Papal Guard; one died, and the fourth became a priest. She lived in profound retirement, dropping her aristocratic name, and in fear lest aught should recall her to the vindictive Regent of France, and bring down fresh misfortune on her head. When at last she came back to Brittany, it was partly on account of an estate of which the forfeiture was menaced through her absence, and partly to separate Louise-Marie from a young Genoese nobleman who assiduously sought her society, but whom the mother believed would never consent to wed her when he knew that her father had died a disgraced man upon the public scaffold. Perhaps in this matter Madame de Talhouët's fears were hardly just to Pietro Doria.

The reader knows the rest. Père Nicolas died, and a few years after Madame de Talhouët, who was not yet sixty, was laid to rest in the cemetery of the convent. Corlay did not marry; but he lived to be quite an old man. In the year when the lovely Dauphiness of fifteen entered France, which to her was to prove so fatal, the sculptor received a visit from a dear Italian friend. Corlay's long curling hair lay white about his shoulders; the Italian was younger by only half a generation; but his eye had not forgotten the fire of his youth. Together the two men stood by the fountain of Guingamp, whose waters had been rising and falling for a quarter of a century. It was as if a symbol of her beloved Italy had sprung up at Louise-Marie's behest under the gables of the old Gothic market-place, and beneath the shadow of the granite towers of Notre Dame; and each stood bareheaded in the sunshine, as though the place were holy, and said a prayer for the woman whom both had loved so well.

BESSIE RAYNER PARKES.



THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART I.—HIS BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADVENTURES.

GRANNIE'S first action every evening, the moment the boys entered the room, was to glance up at the clock that she might see whether they had arrived in reasonable time. This was not pleasant, because it reminded Robert how impossible it was for him to have a lesson on either violin so long as the visit to Bodyfauld lasted. If they had only been allowed to sleep at Rothieden, what a universe of freedom would have been theirs! As it was, he had but two hours, pared at both ends, in the middle of the day. If the shoemaker could have given him a lesson at that time, he would not have dared to carry his instrument through the streets of Rothieden—a proceeding certain to come to his grandmother's ears. It was several days before he made up his mind what to do in order to reap some benefit from the recovery of the violin. For after he was willing to run the risk of successive mid-day *solos* in the old factory—he was not prepared to carry the instrument through the streets, or be seen entering the place with it. But the factory lay at the opposite corner of a large quadrangle divided into the gardens of the various houses forming its sides, the garden belonging to the factory itself occupying the chief part; and the corner of this garden touched the corner of the garden of the house which had formerly belonged to Robert's father, who had had a door made at the point of junction in the walls, so that he could go from his house to his business across his own property. If this door were not locked, and Robert could pass without offence, what a north-west passage it would be for him! The little garden belonging to his grandmother's house had only a slight wooden fence to divide it from the other, and even in this fence there was a little gate; so that he would only have to run along the top-walk of the other garden to reach the door in the wall. He would make the attempt the very next day.

With his violin in its paper under his arm, he sped like a hare from gate to door, found it not even latched, only pushed-to, and rusted into such rest as it was dangerous to the hinges to disturb. He opened it, however, without any accident, and then, closing it behind him, took his way more leisurely through the tangled grass of his grandmother's property. When he reached the factory, he judged it prudent to search out a more secure nook, one more full of silence, that is, whence the sounds would be less certain to reach the ears of the passers-by, and came upon a small room, near the top, which had been the manager's bedroom. In this, as it seemed to Robert, there still remained some of the signs of ancient occupation. A cloak hung on the wall,

and the ashes of a fire lay in the grate: nobody had been here for years. It was the safest place in the world for his design. He undid his instrument carefully, tuned its strings tenderly, and soon found that his former facility, such as it was, was not far beyond his present reach. He did not venture to remain above an hour, and, hastening back as he came, was in time for his dinner. He had felt tempted to leave the instrument, but no one could tell what might happen, and he saw that if he did, he must be miserable with anxiety about it.

Thus he went on for some days without interruption—not, however, without having been observed more than once by Miss St. John from her window. When, returning from his fourth visit, he opened the door between the gardens, he started back in dismay, for there stood the beautiful lady.

Robert hesitated for a moment whether to fly or speak. He was a country boy rude of speech, but he was three parts a Celt, and those who know the address of the Irish or of the Scotch Highlanders, know how much that involves as to manners and bearing. He advanced the next instant and spoke.

"I beg yer pardon, mem. I thought naebody wad see me. I haena dune nae ill."

"I didn't suppose you had. But what makes you go through here always at the same hour with the same parcel under your arm?"

"Ye winna tell naebody—will ye, mem, gin I tell you?"

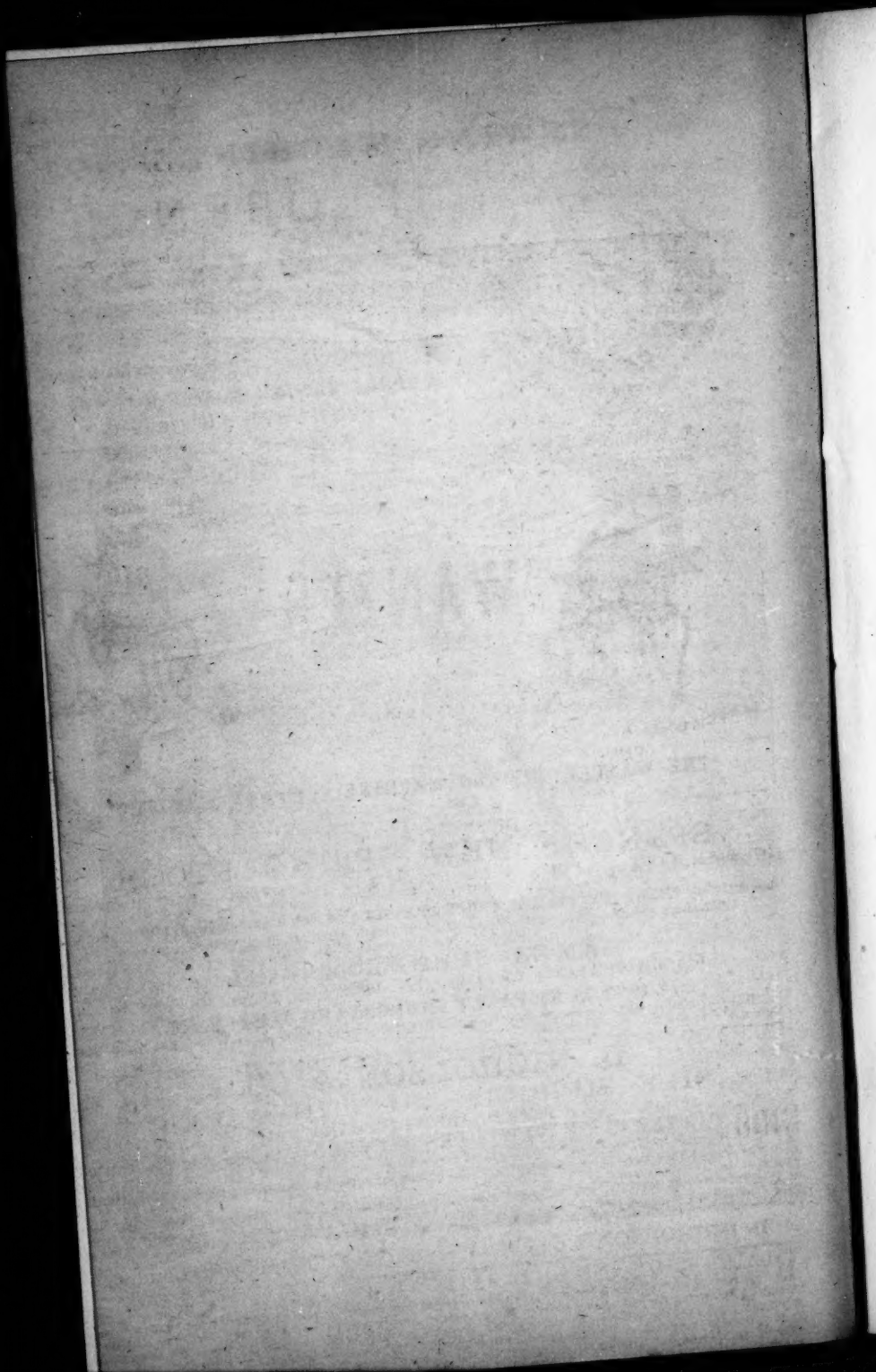
Miss St. John, amused, and interested besides in the contrast between the boy's oddly noble face and good bearing on the one hand, and on the other the drawl of his bluntly articulated speech, and the coarseness of his tone, both seeming to her in the extreme of provincialism, promised; and Robert, entranced by all the qualities of her voice and speech, and not less by the nearer view of her lovely face, confided in her at once.

"Ye see, mem," he said, "I cam' upo' my grandfather's fiddle. But my grandmither thinks the fiddle's no gude. And sae she tuik and she hed it. But I faun't again. An' I daurna play i' the hoose, tho' my grannie's i' the country, for Betty hearin' me and tellin' her. And sae I gang to the auld fact'ry there. It belongs to my grannie, and sae does the yaird (*garden*). An' this hoose an' yaird was ance my father's, and sae he had that door throu. An' I thocht gin hit war open, it wad be a fine thing for me to haud fowk ohn seen me. But it was verra ill-bred to you, mem, I ken, to come throu your yaird ohn speirt leave. I beg yer pardon, mem, an' I'll jist gang back an' roon' by the ro'd. This is my fiddle I hae aneath my airm. We bude to pit back the case o' t' whaur it was afore, to haud my grannie ohn kent 'at she had tint the grup o' t'."

Certainly Miss St. John could not have understood the half of the words Robert used, but she understood his story notwithstanding, and, herself an enthusiast in music, felt her sympathies at once engaged for the awkward boy who was thus trying to steal an entrance into the fairy halls of sound. But she forbore any further allusion to the violin for the present, and contented herself with assuring Robert that he was heartily welcome to go through the garden as often as he pleased. She accompanied her words with a smile that



"ROBERT FALCONER."



made Robert feel not only that she was the most beautiful of princesses, but that she had presented him with something beyond price in the most self-denying manner. He took off his cap, thanked her very heartily, if not very *politely*, and hastened away to the little gate. A few years later this encounter might have spoiled his dinner; but I am glad to say, I have to record no such evil result of the present adventure.

With Miss St. John, music was the highest form of human expression, as must often be the case with those whose feeling is much in advance of their thought, and to whom, therefore, what may be called mental sensation is the highest known condition. Music to such is poetry in solution. It generates that infinite atmosphere, common to both musician and poet, which the latter fills with shining worlds.—But if my reader wishes to follow out for himself the idea thus crudely suggested; he must be careful to make no confusion between those who feel musically or think poetically, and the musician or the poet. One who can only play the music of others, however exquisitely, is not a musician, any more than one who can read verse to the satisfaction, or even expound it to the enlightenment, of the poet himself, is therefore a poet.—When Miss St. John would worship God, it was in music that she found the readiest path for her feelings to ascend heavenward. Hence music was the divine thing in the world for her; and to find any one loving music humbly and faithfully was for her to find a brother or sister believer. But she had been so often disappointed in her expectations from those she took to be such, that of late she had become less sanguine. Still there was something about the boy that roused once more her musical hopes; and, however she may have restrained herself from the full indulgence of them, certain it is that the next day, when she saw Robert pass, this time leisurely, along the top of the garden, she put on her bonnet and shawl, and, allowing him time to reach his den, followed him in the hope of finding out whether or not he could play. I do not know what proficiency the boy had made, very likely not much, for a man can feel the music of his own bow, or of his own lines, long before any one else can discover it; therefore, most likely, it was as well for Robert that she was to be disappointed. He had already made a path, not exactly worn one, but trampled one, through the neglected grass, so that she had no difficulty in finding the entrance to the factory.

She felt a little *eerie*, as Robert would have called it, when she entered the waste silent place, for motionless machines have a look of death about them, at least when they bear such signs of disuse as those that filled these rooms. Not hearing any sound, she walked for a while in the ground-floor of the building; but still hearing nothing, she thought she must be beyond reach of the sound, and ascended to the first-floor. Here, likewise, all was silence. She ventured up the next stair, but began to feel a little troubled as well as *eerie*, the silence was so obstinately persistent. Could it be possible that there was no violin in that parcel—that it was something stolen? Passing piled-up stores of old thread, she still went on, led by a curiosity stronger than her gathering fear. At last she came to a door, and pushing it open, saw Robert lying on the floor with his head in a pool of blood.

Now Mary St. John was both brave and kind, and though not insensible to

he fact that she too must be in danger where violence had been used to a boy, she set about assisting him at once. His face was quite deathlike, but she did not think he was dead. She drew him out into the passage, for the soom was close, and began to do all she could to recover him. For some time he did not even breathe, but at last his lips moved, and he murmured:

"Sandy, Sandy, ye 've broken the bonnie leddy."

Then he opened his eyes, and seeing a face to dream about bending in kind consternation over him, closed them again with a smile and a sigh, as if to prolong his dream.

The blood now came fast into his forsaken cheeks, and began to flow again from the wound in his head. The lady bound her handkerchief round it. After a little, he rose and stared wildly about him, saying, with imperfect articulation, "Father! father!" Then he looked at Miss St. John with a kind of dazed inquiry in his eyes. He tried several times to speak, but could not.

"Can you walk at all?" asked Miss St. John, supporting him, for she was anxious to leave the place.

"Yes, mem, weel enuch," he answered.

"Come with me, then. I will help you home."

"Na, na," he said. "Dinna min' me. Rin hame, mem, or he'll see ye!"

"Who will see me?"

Robert stared more wildly, put his hand to his head, and made no reply. She began half to lead, half to support him down the stair. They had reached the first landing, when he cried out:

"My bonny leddy!"

"What is it?" said Miss St. John, thinking he meant her.

"My fiddle! my fiddle!" he answered, and turned to go up again.

"Sit down there," said Miss St. John, "and I'll fetch it."

Though not without some tremor, she darted back to the room. Then she turned faint for the first time, but determinedly supporting herself, she looked about, saw the brown-paper parcel on a shelf, took it, and hurried out of the room with a shudder.

Robert stood leaning against the wall. He stretched out his hand for the parcel eagerly.

"Gie me her. Gie me her."

"You had better let me carry it. You are not able."

"Na, na, mem. Ye dinna ken hoo easy she is to hurt."

"Oh, yes, I do!" returned Miss St. John, smiling, and Robert could not withstand the smile.

"Weel, tak' care o' her, as ye wad o' yer ainsel', mem," he said, yielding.

He was now much better, and before he had been two minutes in the open air, he declared that he was quite well. He walked up the garden without any more help than the carrying of his precious parcel for him.

When they were within Captain Fordyce's wall, Robert again held out his hand for his violin.

"No, no," said his new friend. "You wouldn't have Betty see you like that, would you?"

"No, mem; but I'll put in the fiddle at my ain window afore she has a chance o' seein' 't," answered Robert, not understanding her; for though he felt a good deal of pain, he had no idea what a dreadful appearance he presented.

"Don't you know that your head is cut?" asked Miss St. John.

"Na! is 't?" said Robert, putting up his hand. "But I maun gang—there's nae help for 't," he added. "Eh! mem, I hae blaudit a' yer bonny goon. That's a sair vex."

"Never mind that," she said, smiling. "That is of no consequence. You must come with me. I must see what I can do. Poor boy!"

"Eh, mem! but ye *are* kin! Gin ye speik like that ye'll gar me greit. Naebody ever spak' to me like that afore. Maybe ye kent my mamma. Ye're sae like her."

This word *mamma* was the only remnant of her that lingered in his speech. Had she lived he would have spoken very differently.

"No, I did not know your mamma. Is she dead?"

"Lang syne, mem. And sae they tell me is yours."

"Yes; and my father too. Yours is alive, I hope."

Robert made no answer.

Miss St. John turned. They were walking towards the house.

The boy had a strange look, and seemed struggling with something in his throat. She thought he was feeling faint again, and made haste to take him to the drawing-room. Her aunt had not yet left her room, and her uncle was out.

"Sit down," she said, and leaving the room, presently returned with a basin of warm water and a little brandy. "There," she said, offering the glass, "that will do you good."

"What is 't, mem?"

"Brandy."

"I daurna touch 't. Grannie cudna bide me to touch 't."

So determined was he, that Miss St. John was forced to yield. Perhaps she wondered that the boy who would deceive his grandmother about a violin should be so immovable in regarding her pleasure in the matter of a needful medicine. But in this I begin to see the very Falconer of my manhood's worship.

"Eh, mem! gin ye wad play something upo' *her*," he resumed (for Sandy's mode had infected Robert), "it wad du me mair guid than a haill bottle o' brandy, or whusky either."

"How do you know that?" asked Miss St. John, proceeding to sponge the wound.

"'Cause mony's the time I hae stud oot there i' the street, hearkenin' till ye playin'—Dooble Sanny says as gin ye war my gran'father's fiddle hersel' turned intil the bonniest cratur ever God made."

How much of this speech she might have understood I cannot tell. But the next words she spoke were only,

"How did you get such a terrible cut?"

She had removed the hair, and found that the injury was, as it seemed to her, severe.

The boy was absolutely silent. She glanced round in his face. He was staring as if he saw nothing, heard nothing. She would try again.

"Did you fall? Or how did you cut your head?"

"Yes, yes, mem, I fell," he answered, hastily, with an air of relief, and possibly with some tone of gratitude for the suggestion of a true answer.

"What made you fall?"

Utter silence again. She felt a kind of—well there is no other word to express it—a kind of *turn*: the boy must have fits, and either could not tell, or was ashamed to tell, what had befallen him. Thereafter she was so silent, that Robert thought she was offended. Possibly he felt a change too in the way she touched him.

"Mem, I *wad* like to tell ye," he said, "but I daurna."

"Oh! never mind," she returned kindly.

"Wad ye promise nae to tell *naeboddy*?"

"Oh, no; I don't want to know," she answered, confirmed in her suspicion and at the same time ashamed of the alteration of feeling the discovery had occasioned.

An uncomfortable silence followed, broken by Robert.

"Gin ye binna pleased wi' me, mem," he said, "I canna bide ye to gang on wi' siccan a job 's that."

How Miss St. John could have understood him, I cannot think; but she did.

"Oh, very well!" she answered, smiling. "Just as you please. Perhaps you had better take this piece of plaster to Betty, and she'll finish it for you."

Robert took the plaster mechanically, and, sick at heart and speechless, rose to go, forgetting even his *bonny leddy* in his grief.

"You had better take your violin with you," said Miss St. John, urged to the cruel experiment by a strong desire to see what the strange boy would do.

He turned. The tears were streaming down his curious face. It went to her heart, and she was bitterly ashamed of herself.

"Come, and let me finish the dressing," she said, in a tone of kindness such as Robert had never heard, not even from Miss Letty when she was washing Ericson's feet. He sat down instantly, saying only:

"Eh, mem! it's sair to bide."

The dressing was soon finished, the hair combed down over it, and Robert looking once more respectable.

"Now, I think that will do," said his nurse.

"Eh, thank ye, mem! Whan I'm able to play upo' the fiddle as weel 's ye play upo' the piana, I'll come an' play at yer window as lang 's ye like to hearken."

She smiled, and Robert was satisfied. He did not dare again to ask her to play something. But she offered.

"Now," she said, "I will play to you, if you like."

When she had finished a lovely little air, which sounded to Robert like the touch of her hands, and her breath on his forehead, she looked round,

and was satisfied, from the rapt expression of the boy's countenance, that at least he had plenty of musical sensibility, and she began to get over the shock that the fancy of his infirmity had given her.

He stood motionless till she said :

"Now you had better go, or Betty will miss you."

Then he made her a bow in which awkwardness and grace were curiously mingled, and taking up his precious parcel, and holding it to his bosom as if it had been a child for whom he felt an access of tenderness, he slowly left the room and the house.

Not even to Shargar did he communicate his adventure. And he went no more to the deserted factory. Yes, he went once more.

He fancied his grandmother's eyes more watchful of him than usual that evening, and he did his best to resist the weariness, and even faintness, that urged him to go to bed. Whether he was able to hide a certain trouble that clouded his spirit as well, I do not know. His wound he did manage to keep a secret, thanks to the care of Miss St. John, who had dressed it with court-plaster.

After this the enchantment of Bodyfauld soon wore off. They had no time to enter into a full enjoyment of country ways and customs, because of those weary lessons, over the *getting* of which Mrs. Falconer kept as strict a watch as ever. To Robert the evening journey, his violin and Miss St. John left at Rothieden, grew tame enough. The return was almost as happy an event to him as the first going.

With Shargar it was otherwise. The freedom for so much longer from Mrs. Falconer's eyes was a pleasure which the walk twice a day, the free air, and the scents and sounds of the country, only came in to swell. But I do not believe the boy even then had so much happiness as when he was beaten and starved by his own mother. And Robert, growing more absorbed in his own thoughts and pursuits, paid him less and less attention as the weeks went on, till Shargar judged it an evil day for him when first he slept under old Ronald Falconer's kilt.

CHAPTER XVII.

NATURE PUTS IN A CLAIM.

BEFORE the day of return arrived, Robert had taken care to remove the violin from his bedroom and restore it once more to its old retreat in Shargar's garret. The very first evening that grannie again spent in her own arm-chair, he hied from the house as soon as it grew dusk, and made his way with his brown-paper parcel to Sandy Elshender's.

Entering the narrow passage from which his shop door opened, and hearing him hammering away at a sole, he stood and unfolded his treasure, then drew a low sigh from her with his bow, and awaited the result. He heard the lapstone fall thundering on the floor, and, like a spider from his cavern, Dooble Sandy appeared in the door, with the *bend*-leather in one hand, and the hammer in the other.

"Lordsake, man! hae ye gotten her again? Gie's a grup o' her!" he cried, dropping leather and hammer.

"Na, na," returned Robert, retreating towards the outer door. "Ye maun sweir upo' her that, whan I want her, I sall hae her ohn demur, or I sanna lat ye lay roset upo' her."

"I sweir't, Robert; I sweir't upo' her," said the soutar, hurriedly, stretching out both his hands as if to receive some human being into his embrace.

Robert placed the violin in those grimy hands. A look of heavenly delight dawned over the hirsute and dirt-besmeared countenance, which drooped into tenderness as he drew the bow across the instrument, and wiled from her a thin wail as of sorrow at their long separation. He then retreated into his den, and was soon sunk in a trance, deaf to everything but the violin, from which no entreaties of Robert, who longed for a lesson, could rouse him; so that he had to go home grievously disappointed, and unrewarded for the risk he had run in venturing the stolen visit.

Next time, however, he fared better; and he contrived so well that, from the middle of June to the end of August, he managed to get two lessons a week, mostly upon the afternoons of holidays, when his absence was not remarkable. For these his master thought himself well paid by the use of the instrument between. He made great progress.

Occasionally he saw Miss St. John in the garden, and once or twice met her in the town; but her desire to find in him a pupil had been greatly quenched by her unfortunate conjecture as to the cause of his accident. She had, however, gone so far as to mention the subject to her aunt, who assured her that old Mrs. Falconer would as soon consent to his being taught gambling as music. The idea, therefore, soon passed away; and beyond a kind word or two when she met him, there was no further communication between them. But Robert would often dream of waking from a swoon, and finding his head lying on her lap, and her lovely face bending over him full of kindness and concern.

By the way, Robert cared nothing for poetry. Virgil was too troublesome to be enjoyed; and in English he met with nothing but the dried leaves and gum-flowers of the last century. Miss Letty once lent him *The Lady of the Lake*; but before he had read the first canto through, his grandmother laid her hands upon it, and, without saying a word, dropped it behind a loose skirting-board in the pantry, where the mice soon made it a ruin sad to behold. For Miss Letty, having heard from the woful Robert of its strange disappearance, and guessing its cause, applied to Mrs. Falconer for the volume; who forthwith, the tongs aiding, extracted it from its hole, and, without shade of embarrassment, held it up like a drowned kitten before the eyes of Miss Letty, intending thereby, no doubt, to impress her with the fate of all seducing spirits that should attempt an entrance into her kingdom: Miss Letty only burst into merry laughter over its fate. So the lode of poetry failed for the present from Robert's life. Nor did it matter much; for had he not his violin?

I have, I think, already said that his grandfather had been a linen manufacturer. When that trade failed, his family had still retained the bleachery, commonly called the *bleach-field*, employing it for the large calico manufactures which had ruined the trade in linen, or for the whitening of such yarn as the

country housewives still spun at home, and the webs they got woven of it in private looms. To Robert and Shargar it was a wondrous pleasure, when the pile of linen which the week had accumulated at the office in the town, was on Saturday heaped high upon the base of a broad-wheeled cart, to get upon it and be carried to the bleach-field which lay along the bank of the river. Soft-laid and high-borne, they traversed the streets in a holiday triumph; and although, once arrived, the manager did not fail to get some labour out of them, yet the store of amusement was endless. The great wheel, which drove the whole machinery; the plash-mill, or, more properly, walk-mill—a word Robert derived from the resemblance of the mallets to two huge feet, and of their motion to walking—with the water plashing and squirting from the blows of their heels; the beatles thundering in *arpeggio* upon the huge cylinder round which the white cloth was wound—each was haunted in its turn and season. The water itself was inexhaustible. Here sweeping in a mass along the race; there divided into branches and hurrying through the walls of the various houses; here sliding through a wooden channel across the floor to fall into the river at the other side; there bubbling up through the bottom of a huge wooden cave or vat, there resting placid in another; here gurgling along a spout; there flowing in a narrow canal through the green expanse of the well-mown bleach-field, or lifted from it in narrow curved wooden scoops, like fairy canoes with long handles, and flung in showers over the outspread yarn—the water was an endless delight.

It is strange how some individual broidery or figure upon nature's garment will delight a boy before he has ever looked Nature in the face, or begun to love herself. But Robert was soon to become dimly conscious of a life within these things—a life not the less real that its operations on his mind had been long unrecognized.

On the grassy banks of the gently-flowing river, at the further edge of whose level the little canal squabbled along, and on the grassy brae which rose immediately from the other side of the canal, were stretched, close beside each other, with scarce a stripe of green betwixt, the long white webs of linen to bleach in the sun, fastened down to the soft mossy ground with wooden pegs, whose tops were twisted into their edges. Strangely would they billow in the wind sometimes, like sea-waves, frozen and enchanted flat, seeking to rise and wallow in the wind with conscious depth and whelming mass. Falconer's delight in the white and green of a little boat, as we lay, one bright morning, on the banks of the Thames between Richmond and Twickenham, led to such a description of the bleach-field that I can write about it as if I had known it myself.

One Saturday afternoon in the end of July, when the westering sun was hotter than at midday, he went down to the lower end of the field, where the river was confined by a dam, and plunged from the bank into deep water. After a swim of half an hour, he ascended the higher part of the field, and lay down upon a broad web to bask in the sun. In his ears was the hush rather than rush of the water over the dam, the occasional murmur of a belt of trees that skirted the border of the field, and the dull continuous sound of

the beetles in the works below, like a persistent growl of thunder on the far-off horizon.

Had Robert possessed a copy of *Robinson Crusoe*, or had his grandmother not cast the *Lady of the Lake*, mistaking it for an idol, if not to the moles and the bats, yet to the mice and the black-beetles, he might have been lying reading it, blind and deaf to the face and the voice of nature, and years might have passed before a response awoke in his heart. It is good that children of faculty, as distinguished from capacity, should not have too many books to read, nor too much of early lessoning. The increase of examinations in our country will increase its capacity and diminish its faculty. We shall have more compilers and reducers, and fewer thinkers; more modifiers and completers, and fewer inventors.

He lay gazing up into the depth of the sky, rendered deeper and bluer by the masses of white cloud that hung almost motionless below it, till he felt a kind of bodily fear lest he should fall off the face of the round earth into the abyss. A gentle wind, laden with pine-odours from the sun-heated trees behind him, flapped its light wing in his face; the humanity of the world smote his heart; the great sky towered up over him, and its divinity entered his soul; a strange longing after something "he knew not nor could name" awoke within him, followed by the pang of a sudden fear that there was no such thing as that which he sought, that it was all a fancy of his own spirit; and then the voice of Shargar broke the spell, calling to him from afar to come and see a great salmon that lay by a stone in the water. But once aroused, the feeling was never stilled; the desire never left him; sometimes growing even to a passion that was relieved only by a flood of tears.

Strange as it may sound to those who have never thought of such things save in connection with Sundays and bibles and churches and sermons, that which was now working in Falconer's mind was the first dull and faint movement of the greatest need that the human heart has—the need of the God-Man. There must be truth in the scent of that pine wood: some one must mean it. There must be a glory in those heavens that depends not upon our imagination: some power greater than they must dwell in them. Some spirit must move in that wind that haunts us with a kind of human sorrow; some soul must look up to us from the eye of that starry flower. It must be something human, else not to us divine.

Little did Robert think that such was his need—that his soul was searching after Him, whose form was constantly presented to him, but as constantly obscured and made unlovely by the words without knowledge spoken in the religious assemblies of the land; that he was longing without knowing it on the Saturday for that from which on the Sunday he would be repelled without knowing it. And it was long before he came any nearer to the knowledge of what he sought. Not for weeks did even the mood broken by the voice of his companion return, though the forms of nature were henceforth full of a pleasure he had never known before. He loved the grass; the water was more gracious to him; he would leave his bed early, that he might gaze on the clouds of the east, with their borders gold-blasted with sunrise; he would linger in the fields, that the amber and purple, and green and red, of the sun-

set, might not escape after the sun unseen, and without its mission. And as long as he felt the mystery, the revelation of the mystery lay before and not behind him.

But poor Shargar! what of him? Had he no soul for such things?—Could he seek after that of whose existence no hint had ever yet reached him? Brother as he was, how could he be other than lives behind Robert? For the latter had ancestors—that is, he came of people with a mental and spiritual history; while the former had been born the birth of an animal; of a *noble* sire, whose family had for generations oppressed the earth, filling it with fire, famine, and slaughter; and of a gipsy mother, a wandering outcast, who loved the fields and woods, but could retain her love for her offspring, in animal fashion, scarcely beyond the period while she gave him suck. The love of freedom and of wild animals, that she had given him, however, was far more precious than any share his male ancestor had borne in his mental constitution. After his fashion he as well as Robert enjoyed the sun and the wind and the water and the sky; but he had sympathies with the salmon and the rooks and the wild rabbits, even stronger than those of Robert.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ROBERT STEALS HIS OWN.

THE period of the *hairst-play*, that is, of the harvest holiday time, drew near, and over the north of Scotland thousands of half-grown hearts were beating with anticipation. Of the devices of boys deceiving themselves into the notion that they expedite a blessed approach by marking its rate, Robert knew nothing: even the notching of sticks was unknown at Rothieden; but he had a mode notwithstanding. I have already alluded to the fact that there was one amusement, a solitary one chiefly, and *therein* not so good as most amusements, into which he entered with the whole energy of his nature: it was kite-flying. The moment that the *hairst-play* approached near enough to strike its image through the eyes of his mind, Robert instantly proceeded to make his kite, or *draigon*, as he called it. Of how many pleasures does pocket-money deprive the unfortunate possessor! What is the going into a shop and buying what you want, compared with the gentle delight of hours and days filled with gaining effort after the attainment of your end? Never boy that bought his kite, even if the adornment thereafter lay in his own hands, and the pictures he still bought were gorgeous as paint or even gilding might make them, could attain such rational and educating enjoyment as Robert did, from the moment when he went to the cooper's to ask for an old gird, or hoop, to the moment when he said, "Noo, Shargar!" and the kite rose slowly from the depth of the aerial flood. The hoop was carefully examined, the best portion cut from it, that pared to a light strength, its ends confined to the proper curve by a string, and then away went Robert to the *wright's* shop. There a slip of wood, of proper length and thickness, was readily granted to his request, free as the daisies of the field. Oh, those horrid town-conditions, where nothing is given for the asking, but all things are sold for money! In Robert's kite the only thing that cost money was

the string to fly it with, and that the grandmother willingly provided, for not even her religious ingenuity could discover any direct or necessarily implicated evil in kite-flying. Indeed, I believe the old lady felt not a little sympathy with the delight of the boy when he saw his kite far aloft, diminished to a speck in the vast blue; a sympathy, it may be, rooted in the religious aspirations which, in innocence, she did so much to suppress in the bosom of her grandchild, while her character, on the other hand, did so much to strengthen the foundations without which to spring from no aspiration can mount aloft or fly heavenwards far. But I have not yet reached the kite-flying, for I have said nothing of the kite's tail, for which principally I began to describe its construction.

As soon as the body of the dragon was completed, Robert attached to its spine the string which was to take the place of its caudal continuation, and at a proper distance from the body joined to the string the first of those cross-pieces of folded paper which in that portion of the animal represent the vertebral processes. Every morning, the moment he issued from his chamber, he proceeded to the garret where the monster lay, and added another joint to his tail, so doing until the day arrived when the lessons were over for a blessed eternity of five or six weeks, and he tipped the whole with a piece of wood, to which grass, *quantum suff.*, might be added from the happy fields.

Upon this occasion the dragon was a monster one. With a little help from Shargar, he had laid the skeleton of a six-foot specimen, and had carried the body to a satisfactory completion.

The tail was still growing, having only sixteen joints, when Mr. Lammie called with an invitation to the boys to spend their holidays with him. It was fortunate for Robert that he was in the room when Mr. Lammie brought forward his request, otherwise he would never have heard of it till the day of departure arrived, and would thus have lost all the delight of anticipation. In frantic effort to control his ecstasy, he sped swiftly to the garret, and with trembling hands tied another joint to the tail of the great dragon—the first time he had ever broken the rule of its daily accretion. Once broken, the rule was henceforth an object of scorn, and the tail grew with frightful rapidity. And the boys agreed that not any of the paltry fields about Rothieden should be honoured with its first flight, but that from Bodyfauld the child of earth should ascend into the regions of upper air.

The making of this kite was a happy thing for Shargar, and a yet happier thing for Robert, in that it introduced again for a time the community of interests which, never great between them, had of late almost entirely ceased. Shargar was happier than he had been for many a day because Robert used him; and Robert was yet happier than Shargar in that his conscience, which had reproached him for his neglect of him, as often as he saw the listless look of the boy fixed upon him, was now silent. But not even his dragon turned aside his attentions from his bonnie lady, the violin. Many were the consultations between the boys as to how best she was to be transported to Bodyfauld, where endless opportunities of holding communion with her would not be wanting, the difficulty being how to get her clear of Rothieden.

The play commenced on a Saturday; but not till the Monday were they

to be set at liberty. Wearily the hours of mental labour and bodily torpidity which the Scotch call the Sabbath passed away, and at length the millennial morning dawned. Robert and Shargar were up before the sun, but strenuous were the efforts required to suppress all tokens of excitement, lest grannie, fearing something injurious to their moral condition from an excess of enjoyment, should give orders to delay their departure for an awfully indefinite time, which might be an hour, a day, or even a week. Horrible conception! Their behaviour, however, was so decorous that not even a hinted threat issued from the lips of Mrs. Falconer.

They set out three hours before noon, carrying the great kite: a cart from Bodyfauld was to fetch their luggage later in the day. As soon as they were clear of the houses, Shargar lay down behind a dyke with the kite, and Robert set off at full speed for Dooble Sanny's shop, making a half-circuit of the town to avoid the chance of being seen by grannie or Betty. Having given due warning before, he found the brown paper parcel ready for him, and carried it off in fearful triumph. He joined Shargar in safety, and they set out on their journey as rich and happy a pair of tramps as ever tramped, having six weeks of their own in their pockets to spend and not spare.

A hearty welcome awaited them, and they were soon revelling in the glories of the place, the first instalment being in the shape of curds and cream, with oatcake and butter, as much as they liked; after which they would "e'en to it like French falconers" with their kite, for the wind had been blowing bravely all the morning, having business to do with the harvest. The stubble-stage not having yet arrived, they were limited to the pasturage and moorland, which, however, large as their kite was, were spacious enough. Slowly the great-headed creature arose from the hands of Shargar, and ascended about twenty feet, when, as if seized with a sudden fit of wrath or fierce indignation, it turned right round and dashed itself with headlong fury to the earth, as if sooner than submit to such slavery a moment longer it would beat out its brains at once.

"It hasna half tail eneuch," cried Robert. "It's queer 'at things winna gang up, ohn hauden them doon. Pu' a guid han'fu' o' clover, Shargar. She's had her fa', an' noo she'll gang up a' richt. She's nane the waur o' 't."

Upon the next attempt, the kite rose triumphantly. But just as it reached the length of the string it had risen into a faster current of air, and, Robert hauling at the end, it first dragged him along, and then lifted him from his feet. After carrying him a few yards, it broke its string, dropped him in a ditch, and, drifting away, went fluttering and wagging downwards in the distance.

"Luik whaur she gangs, Shargar," cried Robert, from the ditch; and, experience coming to his aid, Shargar took landmarks of the direction in which it went; nor was it long before they found it with its tail entangled in the topmost branches of a hawthorn-tree, and its head beating the ground at its foot. It was at once agreed that the string was not strong enough and that it would not be safe to fly it again till they got some stronger.

Having heard the fate of the kite, Mr. Lammie produced a shilling from the pocket of his capacious trowsers, and gave it to Robert, who resolved

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Having heard the fate of the kite, Mr. Lammie produced a shilling from the pocket of his capacious trowsers, and gave it to Robert, who resolved

to go to the town the next morning and make a grand purchase of string, and during the afternoon, roamed about the farm with his hands in his pockets, revolving if not many memories, yet many questions, while Shargar followed like a pup at the heels of Miss Lammie, to whom, during his former visit, he had become greatly attached.

In the evening, resolved to make a confidant of Mr. Lammie, and indeed to cast himself upon the kindness of the household generally, he went up to his room to release his violin from its prison of brown paper; but what was his dismay to find that the violin was not his "bonny leddy," but her poor cousin, the souter's "auld wife!" It was too bad of him. *Dooble Sanny* indeed!

Robert first stared, then went into a rage, and then came out of it to go into a resolution. He replaced the unwelcome fiddle in the parcel, and came down stairs gloomy and still wrathful, but silent. The evening passed over, and the inhabitants of the farmhouse went early to bed. Robert tossed about fuming on his. He had not undressed.

About eleven o'clock, after all had been still for more than an hour, he took his shoes in one hand and the brown parcel in the other, and descending the stairs like a thief, undid the quiet wooden bar that secured the door, and let himself out. All was darkness, for the moon was not yet up, and he felt a strange sensation of ghostliness in himself—awake and out of doors, when he ought to be asleep and unconscious in bed. He had never been out so late before, and he felt as if he were walking in the region of the dead, existing when and where he had no business to exist. For this was the time that Nature kept for her own quiet, and having once put her children to bed—hidden them away with the world wiped out of them for the time—enclosed them in her ebony box, as George Herbert says, she did not expect to have her hours of undress and meditation intruded upon by a venturesome schoolboy; and all this somehow that schoolboy vaguely felt. But she let him pass. He put on his shoes and hurried to the road. He heard a horse stamp in the stable, and saw a cat dart across the corn-yard as he went through. Those were all the signs of life about the place.

It was a cloudy night and still. Nothing was to be heard but his own footsteps. The cattle in the fields were all asleep. The larch and spruce trees stood still as clouds upon the hill by the foot of which his road wound, and he could just see the sky on the top of the hill through their stems. It was washed with the faintest of light, for the moon far below, was yet climbing towards the horizon. A star or two sparkled where the clouds broke, but so little light was there that, until he had passed the moorland on the hill, he could not get the horror of moss-holes, and deep springs covered with treacherous green, out of his head. But he never thought of turning, and trudged bravely on. When the fears of the way at length fell back and allowed his own thoughts to rise, the sense of a presence, or of something that might be a presence, was the first thing to awake in him. The stillness seemed to be thinking all around his head. But here the way grew so dark, for it lay through a corner of the pine-wood, that he had to feel the edge of the road with his foot to make sure that he was keeping upon it, and the

sense of the silence vanished. Then he passed a farm, and the motions of horses came through the dark, and a doubtful crow from a young inexperienced cock, who did not yet know the moon from the sun. Then a sleepy low from the byre startled him, and made him quicken his pace involuntarily.

By the time he reached Rothieden all the lights were out, and this was just what he wanted. For he knew this much of the economy of Dooble Sanny's abode: the outer door was always left on the latch at night, because other people besides himself and his wife lived in the upper part of the house, and no one family cared to take the trouble of inquiring if the others were at home. The soutar's workshop opened from the passage, close to the outer door. The door of the workshop was locked of course, but Robert knew where the key was deposited on a nail just inside the soutar's bedroom.

Arrived at the house, he lifted the latch, closed the door behind him, took off his shoes once more, like a housebreaker, as indeed he was, although a righteous one, and felt his way to and up the stair to the bedroom door, which was fortunately a little ajar, so that he scarcely needed to push it to reach the key. With this he descended, his heart beating more and more wildly as he approached the realization of his hopes. As gently as he could he turned it in the lock. It did creak, but not much, and in a moment more he had his hands on the spot where the shoemaker always left the violin. His heart sank within him: there was nothing there. A blank of dismay held him both motionless and thoughtless for a moment, nor had he recovered his senses before he heard footsteps, which he well knew, approaching in the street. He slunk at once, with the parcel still in his hand, into a corner. Elshender entered, feeling his way carefully, and muttering at his wife for leaving the door open. He was tipsy, most likely, but he knew where to put his fiddle in safety, for Robert heard its faint echo as he laid it gently down. Nor was he tipsy enough to forget to lock the door behind him, leaving Robert incarcerated amongst the old boots and leather and rosin.

For one moment only did the boy's heart fail him. The next he was in action, for a happy thought had already struck him. Hastily as he could, that he might forestall sleep in the brain of the soutar, he undid his parcel, carefully tied his own violin up in the paper, and then took the "old wife" of the soutar, and proceeded to perform upon her a trick which in a merry moment his master had taught him, and which, not without some feeling of irreverence, he had occasionally practised upon his own bonny lady.

The shoemaker's room was overhead; its thin floor of planks was the ceiling of the workshop. Presently, ere he was well laid down by the side of his sleeping wife, he heard a frightful sound from below, as if some one were breaking and tearing to pieces his beloved violin. No sound of rending coffin-planks in copper-lined vault could have been so horrible to the drink-dazed ears of the soutar. He sprang from his bed in such haste as to shake the whole crazy tenement to the foundation.

The moment Robert heard that, he hastily put the violin in its place, and took his station by the *door-check*. The soutar came tumbling down the stair, rushed at the door, and found that he had to go back for the key. When he

opened it at length, he went straight forward to the nest of his treasure, and Robert slipping out noiselessly, was in the next street before Dooble Sanny having found the fiddle uninjured, and not discovering the substitution, had finished concluding that the whisky and his imagination together had played him a very discourteous trick between them, and retired once more to bed. Not till Robert had cut his foot badly with a piece of glass, did he discover that he had left his shoes behind him. He tied it up with his handkerchief, and limped home the three miles, too happy to care for consequences now.

Before he had gone far, the harvest moon floated up on the horizon, large, and distorted to the shape of the broadside of a barrel. As he made the best of his way along, Robert felt that she was staring at him in amazement to see him out at such a time of the night. But he grasped his violin and went on. Nor had he any fear as he passed again over the desolate moss, although he saw the stagnant pools glimmering about him in the moonlight. Ever after this first experience he had a fancy for roaming at night. He reached home in safety, found the door as he had left it, and ascended to his bed, triumphant in his fiddle.

In the morning bloody prints were discovered on the stair, and traced to the door of Robert's room. Miss Lammie entered in some alarm, and found him fast asleep on his bed, still dressed, with a brown-paper parcel in his arms, and one of his feet evidently enough the source of the frightful stains. She was too kind to wake him, and inquiry was postponed till they met at breakfast, to which he descended barefooted, save for a bandage on one foot.

"Robert, my lad," said Mr. Lammie, kindly, "hoo cam' ye by that bluidy fut?"

Without waiting for any farther urging, Robert began the story, and, guided by a few questions from his host, at length told the tale of the violin from beginning to end, omitting only his adventure in the old factory. Many a *guffaw* from Mr. Lammie greeted its progress, and Miss Lammie laughed till the tears were rolling unheeded down her cheeks, especially when Shargar, emboldened by the admiration Robert had awakened, imparted his private share in the comedy, namely, the entombment of Boston in a fifth-fold state he had not dreamed of before; for the Lammies were none of the *unco guid* to be censorious upon the boys' exploits. The whole affair evidently advanced them both in favour at Bodyfauld; and the entreaties of Robert that nothing should reach his grandmother's ears were satisfactorily responded to, for the severities of Mrs. Falconer were well known to the worthy couple.

After breakfast, Miss Lammie dressed the wounded foot. But what was to be done for shoes, for Robert's Sunday pair had been left at home? Under ordinary circumstances it would have been no hardship to any Scotch boy in his position to go barefoot for the rest of the autumn, but the cut was rather a serious one. So his feet were cased in a pair of Mr. Lammie's Sunday boots, which, from their size, made it so difficult for him to get along, that even if they had had suitable string, there would have been no question of flying the kite that day. He did not go far from the doors, but chiefly revelled in the company of his violin in his own room, playing all the tunes

he knew, and trying over a new one from a dirty old book of Scotch airs, which his teacher had lent him some time ago.

In the evening, as they sat together after supper, Mr. Lammie said:

"Weel, Robert, hoo's the fiddle?"

"Fine, I thank ye, sir," answered Robert.

"Lat's hear what ye can du wi' 't."

Robert fetched the instrument and complied.

"That's no that ill," remarked the farmer. "But eh, man! ye suld hae heard yer gran'father han'le the bow. That *was* something to hear ance in a body's life. Ye wad hae jist thought the strings had been drawn frae his ain inside, he kent them sae weel, and han'led them sae fine. He jist fan' (*felt*) them like wi' 's fingers throu' the bow and the horsehair and a', a' the time 'at he was drawin' the soun' frae them, an' they jist did onything 'at he likit. Eh! to hear him play the Flooers o' the Forest wad hae garred ye greit yersel' nearhan' blin'."

"Cud my father play?" asked Robert.

"Ay, weel eneuch for *him*. He could du onything he likit to try, better nor middlin'. I never saw sic a man. He played upo' the bagpipes, and the flute, and the bugle, and I kenna what a', but a'thegither they cam' na within sicht o' his father upo' the auld fiddle. Lat's hae a luik at her."

He took the instrument reverently in his hands, turned it over and over, and said:

"Ay, ay; it's the same auld mull, an' I wat it grun' (*ground*) bonny meal. That sma' crater noo 'll be worth a hunner poun' I s' warran'," he added, as he restored it carefully into Robert's hands, to whom it was honey and spice to see his bonny lady in the company of those who could pay her the honour due to her. "Can ye play the Flooers o' the Forest, no?" he added yet again.

"Ay can I," answered Robert, with some pride, and laid the bow on the violin, and played the air through without blundering a single note.

"Weel, that's verra weel," said Mr. Lammie; "but it's nae mair like as yer gran'father played it, than gin there war twa sawyers at it, ane at ilka lug o' the bow, wi' the fiddle atween them in a saw-pit."

Robert's heart sank within him; but Mr. Lammie went on:

"To hear the bow croudin' (*cooing*), and wailin', and singin', and greitin' ower the strings wad hae jist garred ye see the lands o' braid Scotlan' wi' a' the lasses greitin' for the lads that lay upo' reid Flodden side; lasses to cut, and lasses to gether, and lasses to bin', and lasses to stook, and lasses to lead, and no a lad amou' them a'. It's jist the murnin' o' women, doin' men's wark as weel as their ain, for the men that suld hae been there; and I s' warran' ye, no a word to say to the orra lad that didna gang wi' the lave" (*rest*).

Robert had not hitherto understood this wail of a pastoral and agricultural people over those who left their labour at their side to lie dead on the field of battle. But Mr. Lammie's description of his grandfather's rendering of the air laid hold of his heart.

"I wad rather be grutten for nor kissed," said he, simply.

"Haud ye to that, my lad," returned Mr. Lammie. "Lat the lasses greit for ye gin they like; but haud oot ower frae the kissin'. I wadna mell wi' t."

"Hoot, John! dinna put sic nonsense i' the bairns' heids," said Miss Lammie.

"Whilk's the nonsense, Aggy?" asked her brother, sily. "But I doobt," he added, "he'll never play the Flooers o' the Forest as it suld be playt, till he's had a taste o' the kissin', lass."

"Weel, ye're a queer instructor o' yowth, 'at says an' onsays i' the same breith!"

"Never ye min'. I haena contradickit mysel' yet; for I hae said naething. But, Robert, my man, ye maun pit mair sowl into yer fiddlin'. Ye canna play the fiddle till ye can gar 't greit. It's unco ready to that o' 'ts ain sel'; and it's my opingon that there's no anither instrument fit to play the Flooers o' the Forest upo', for that verra rizzon, in a' his Majjesty's dominions. My father playt the fiddle, but no like your gran'father."

Robert was silent. He spent the whole of the next morning in reiterated attempts to alter his style of playing the air in question, but in vain—as far at least as any satisfaction to himself was the result. He laid the instrument down in despair, and sat for an hour disconsolate upon the bedside. His visit had not as yet been by any means so fertile in pleasure as he had anticipated. He could not fly his kite; he could not walk much; he had lost his shoes; Mr. Lammie had not approved of his playing; and, although he had his will of the fiddle, he could not get his will out of it. He would never play so as to please Miss St. John. It was nothing but manly pride that kept him from crying. He was sorely disappointed and dissatisfied; and the world might be dreary, even at Bodyfauld.

Few men can wait *upon* the bright day in the midst of the dull one. They are forced to wait *for* it.

CHAPTER XIX.

JESSIE HEWSON.

THE wound on Robert's foot festered, and had not yet healed when the sickle was first put to the barley. He hobbled out, however, to the field; for he could not bear to be left alone with his violin now, so dreadfully oppressive was it to feel that he could not play upon it to any good purpose. He began to think whether he had not fallen away in his execution as a judgment upon his selfishness in taking it away from the poor soutar, who could do so much more with it, and to whom, consequently, it was so much more valuable than to himself. The pain in his foot, likewise, had been very depressing; and but for the kindness of his friends, especially of Miss Lammie, he would have been altogether "a weary wight forlorn." Shargar was unable to comfort him, although he was happier than ever he had been in his life. He hung on Miss Lammie's looks, and her steps from spence (*store-room, as in Devonshire*) to milk-house, and from milk-house to chessel, were haunted by his white face, surmounted by the glory of his red hair, which one of the farm-servants declared he had once mistaken for a fun-buss (*win-bush*) on fire. This

day Miss Lammie had gone to the field to see the first handful of barley cut, and Shargar was there, of course, and even Robert had dragged his aching foot after the rest. It was a glorious day of blue and gold, with just wind enough to set the barley-heads a-talking. But, whether from the heat of the sun, or the pain of his foot, operating on the general discouragement under which he laboured, Robert turned all at once very faint; and after he came a little to himself, drew away to the cottage of a cottar, whose family had been settled upon the farm of Bodyfauld from time immemorial. They were, indeed, like other cottars, a kind of feudal dependents on the farm, occupying an acre or two for their own behoof, in return for which they performed certain stipulated labour, called *cottar-wark*, besides generally supplying two men for the work of the farm, for which they received the regular wages.

Alas for Scotland that these families are now to seek! Would that in the parliaments of our country there were such a proportion of noble-minded men now, as at one time was to be found in the clay huts scattered along a hill-side or grouped about a central farm, whose wretched look would move to pity the heart of many a man as inferior to them as a King Charles's lap-dog is to a shepherd's collie. There the utensils of life were mean enough; but the life itself was often *elixir vite*—a true family life, looking up to the high, divine life. But well for the world that such life has been scattered over it, east and west, to be the seed of fresh growth in new lands. Out of offence to the individual, God brings good to the whole; for he pets no nation, but trains it for the perfect globular life of all nations—of his world—of his universe. As he makes families mingle, to redeem each from its family selfishness, so he will make nations mingle, and love and correct and reform and develop each other, till the planet-world shall go singing through space one harmony to the God of the whole earth. The excellence must vanish from one portion, that it may be diffused through the whole. The seed ripens on one favoured mound, and is scattered over the plain. We console ourselves with the higher thought, that if Scotland is worse, the world is better. Yea, even they by whom the offence came, and who have first to reap the woe of that offence, because they did the will of God to satisfy their own avarice in laying land to land and house to house, shall not reap their punishment in having their own will, and standing therefore alone in the earth when the good of their evil deeds returns upon it; but the tears of men that ascended to heaven in the heat of their burning dwellings shall descend in the dew of blessing even on the hearts of them that kindled the fire.—“Something too much of this.”

Robert lifted the latch, and walked into the cottage. It was not quite so strange to him as it would be to most of my readers; still, he had not been in such a place before. A girl who was stooping by the small peat fire on the hearth looked up, and, seeing that he was lame, came across the heights and hollows of the clay-floor, worn by feet and brooms, to meet him. Robert spoke so faintly that she could not hear.

“What’s yer wull?” she asked; then, changing her tone—“Eh! ye’re no weel,” she said. “Come in to the fire. Tak’ a haud o’ me, and come yer wa’s butt.”

She was a pretty, indeed graceful girl of about eighteen, with the elasticity rather than undulation of movement which distinguishes the peasant from the city girl. She led him to the chimla-lug (*the ear of the chimney*), carefully levelled a wooden chair to the inequalities of the floor, and said :

"Sit ye doon. Will I fess a drappy o' milk?"

"Gie me a drink o' watter, gin ye please," said Robert.

She brought it. He drank; and felt better at once. A baby woke in a cradle on the other side of the fire, and began to cry. The girl went and took him up; and then Robert—who already had begun to speculate upon character—saw what she was like. Light-brown hair clustered about a delicately-coloured face and hazel eyes. Later in the harvest her cheeks would be ruddy—now, they were peach-coloured. A white neck rose above a pink print jacket, called a wrapper; and the rest of her visible dress was a blue petticoat. She ended in pretty, brown, bare feet. Robert liked her, and began to talk. If his imagination had not been already filled, he would have fallen in love with her, I dare say, at once, for, except Miss St. John, he had never seen anything he thought so beautiful. The baby cried now and then.

"What ails the bairnie?" he asked.

"Ow, it's jist cuttin' its teeth. Gin it greits muckle, I maun jist tak' it oot to my mither. She'll sune quaiet it. Are ye haudin' better?"

"Hoot, ay. I'm a' richt, noo. Is yer mither shearin'?"

"Na. She's gatherin'. The shearin's some sair wark for her e'en noo. I suld hae been shearin', but my mither wad fain hae a day o' the hairst. She thocht it wad du her gude. But I s' warran' a day o' t' 'll sair her, and I s' be at it the morn. She's been unco dowie (*ailing*) a' the summer; and sae has the bairnie."

"Ye hae had a sair time o' t, than."

"Ay, some. But I aye got some sleep. I jist tuik the towie (*string*) into the bed wi' me, and whan the bairnie grat, I waukit, and rockit it till 't fell asleep again. But whiles naething wad du but tak' him till 's mammie."

All the time she was petting and fondling the child, who would go on fretting when not actually crying.

"Is he yer brither, than?" asked Robert.

"Ay, what ither? I maun tak' him, I see. But ye can sit there as lang's ye like; and gin ye gang afore I come back, jist turn the key i' the door to lat onybody ken that there's naebody i' the hoose."

Robert thanked her, and remained seated in the shadow by the chimney. The fire was scarcely more than ashes, and did not heat the room. The chimney was formed by nothing but a smoke-browned plank fastened up the wall on each side, as far as a man's height, and an inverted wooden funnel above that to take the smoke and conduct it through the roof. By the side of the upright plank Robert sat, gloomily gazing at a spot of sunlight which burned bright on the brown clay floor. All was still as death. And Robert felt the white-washed walls even more desolate than if they had been smoke-begrimed.

Looking about him, he found that over his head was something which he

did not understand. Apparently it belonged to the structure of the cottage, but was as big as the stump of a great tree; and he could not, in the imperfect light, and the dazzling of the sun-spot he had been staring at, make it out, or how it came to be up there, unsupported, as far as he could see. He rose to examine it, lifted a bit of tarpaulin which hung before it, and found a rickety box, with two shelves in it full of books. It was suspended by a rope from a great nail in the wall.

Now, although there were more books in Mr. Lammie's house than in his grandmother's, the only one Robert had found that in the least enticed him to read, was a translation of George Buchanan's *History of Scotland*. He had tried to read it faithfully, believing every word of it, but had at last broken down at the fiftieth king or so. Imagine, then, the boy's feelings, when, having pulled a ragged and thumb-worn book from among those of James Hewson the cottar, he, for the first time, found himself in the midst of the *Arabian Nights*. I shrink from all attempt to set forth in words the rainbow-coloured coruscations of delight in that boy's brain. When Jessie Hewson returned, she found him seated where she had left him, so buried in his volume that he never lifted his head till she spoke to him.

"Ye hae gotten a buik," she said.

"Ay have I," answered Robert decisively.

"It's a fine buik, that. Did ye ever see 't afore?"

"Na, never."

"There's three wolums o' 't aboot, here and there," said Jessie; and, with the child in one arm, she proceeded with the other to search for them in the *crap o' the wa'*, that is, the top of the wall where the rafters rest, unenclosed, and affording a natural shelf, on which things are put out of the way. Thence she took down two or three books, which she placed beside Robert.

"There's nane o' them there," she said; "but maybe ye wad like to luik at that anes."

Robert thanked her, but was too busy to feel the least curiosity about any book in the world but that he was reading. So he sat on, heart and soul and mind absorbed in the marvels of the eastern skald; the stories told at the corners of streets in Cairo, amidst gorgeous costumes, and camels, and the passing of women veiled from head to foot, vibrating here in the heart of a Scotch boy, in the darkest corner of a mud cottage, at the foot of a hill of cold-loving pines, with a barefooted girl and a baby for his companions.

But the pleasure he had been having was of a sort rather to expedite than to delay the subjective arrival of dinner-time. There was, however, happily no occasion to go home in order to appease his hunger; he had only to join the men and women in the barley-field, to be made welcome to a share of their dinner, for there was sure to be more than enough for everybody as long as Miss Lammie was at the head of the commissariat. When he had had as much milk-porridge as he could eat, and a good slice of *rwack* cheese (that is, a certain cheese of gelatinous and therefore elastic consistency), with a caup (*wooden bowl*) of ale, all of which he consumed as if the good of them lay in the haste of their appropriation, he hurried back to the cottage, and sat there reading the *Arabian Nights*, till the sun went down in the

orange-hued west, and in the gloamin' the reapers came home, John and Elspet Hewson, and their son George, to their supper and early bed.

John was a cheerful, rough, Roman-nosed, black-eyed man, who took snuff largely, and was not careful to remove the traces of the habit. He had a loud voice, and an original way of regarding things, which, with his vivacity, made every remark sound like the announcement of a discovery.

"Are ye there, Robert?" said he, as he entered.

"He's been here a' day, readin' like a colliginer," said Jessie.

"What are ye readin' sae eident, man?" asked John.

"A buik o' stories, here," answered Robert, carelessly, shy of being supposed so much engrossed with them as he really was.

There is a modesty in all young delight. I should never expect much of a young poet who was not rather ashamed of the distinction which yet he chiefly coveted. The true love of art is a passion at first wild and shy, which would hide itself, like a boy's or maiden's first love, from the gaze of the people. Something like this was Robert's feeling over the *Arabian Nights*.

"Ay," said John, taking snuff from a small bone spoon, "it's a gran' buik that; but my son Charley, him 'at 's deid and gane hame, wad hae tellt ye it was idle time readin' that, wi' sic a buik as that ither lyin' at yer elbuck."

He pointed to one of the few books Jessie had taken from the *crap o' the wa'* and laid down beside him on the well-soured deal table. Robert, who had risen and laid down the book he had been reading, took up the volume to which John pointed, and opened it. There was no title-page.

"*The Tempest*?" he said. "What is 't? Poetry?"

"Ay is 't. It's Shakspear."

"I hae heard o' him," said Robert. "What was he?"

"A player kin' o' a chiel, wi' an unco sicht o' brains," answered John. "He cudna hae had muckle time to gang skelpin' and sornin' aboot the country like maist o' thae cattle, gin he wrote a' that, I'm thinkin'."

"Whaur did he bide?"

"Awa' in Englan'—maistly aboot Lonnon, I'm thinkin'. That's the place for a' by-ordinar fowk, they say."

"Hoo lang is 't sin he deid?"

"I dinna ken. A hunner year or twa, I s' warran'. It's a lang time; but I'm thinkin' fowk than was jist something like what they are noo. But I ken unco little aboot him, for the prent's some sma', and I'm some ill for lozin' my characters, and sae I dinna win that far benn wi' him. Geordie there 'll tell ye mair aboot him nor I can."

But George Hewson had not much to communicate, for he had only lately landed on the shore of Shakspeare's country, and had got but a very little way inland as yet. Nor did Robert much care, for his head was full of the *Arabian Nights*. This, however, was his first introduction to Shakspeare.

Finding himself very much at home with the family, he stopped a little longer, sharing their supper, and resuming his seat in the *chimla-neuk* when the book was brought out for worship. The oil-lamp of iron, with the pith of a rush for the wick, which hung against the side of the chimney, was lighted, and John sat down to read. But as his eyes and the print, too, had

grown a little dim with years, the lamp was not enough, and he asked for a "fir-can'le." A splint of fir dug from the peat-bog was handed to him, and he lighted it at the lamp. Its clear resinous flame enabled him to read a short psalm. Then they sang a most wailful tune, and then he prayed. If I were to give the prayer as John uttered it, I might make my reader laugh, therefore I abstain, assuring him only that, although full of long words—amongst the rest, *aspiration* and *ravishment*—the prayer of the cheerful, joke-loving cottar contained evidence of a degree of religious development rare, I doubt, amongst bishops.

When Robert left the cottage, he found that the sky was partly clouded and the air cold. The nearest way home was across the barley-stubble of the day's reaping, which lay under a little hill covered with various species of the pine. His own soul was like a quiet moonless night, after the restful day he had spent, and under the reaction from the new excitement of the stories he had been reading. The thought of his mother came back upon him, and her written words, "O Lord, my heart is very sore;" and the thought of his father followed that, and he limped slowly home, laden with thoughts of sadness. As he reached the middle of the field, the wind was suddenly there with a low *sough* from out of the north-west. The heads of barley in the sheaves leaned away with a soft rustling from before it; and Robert felt for the first time the sadness of a harvest-field. Then the wind swept away to the pine-covered hill, and raised a rushing and a wailing amongst its thin-clad branches, and to the ear of Robert the trees seemed to be singing over again in their night solitudes the tune he had just heard sung by the cottar's family. When he looked to the westward, whence the wind came, he saw nothing but a pale cleft in the sky. The meaning, the music of the night awoke in his soul; he forgot his lame foot, and the weight of Mr. Lammie's great boots, ran home and up the stair to his own room, seized his violin with eager haste, nor laid it down again till he could draw from it, at will, a sound like the moaning of the wind over the stubble-field. Then he knew that he could play the *Flowers of the Forest*. The Wind that Shakes the Barley cannot have been named from the barley after it was cut, but while it stood in the field: the *Flowers of the Forest* was of the gathered harvest.

He tried the air once over in the dark, and then carried his violin down to the room where Mr. and Miss Lammie sat.

"I think I can play 't noo, Mr. Lammie," he said abruptly.

"Play what, callant?" asked his host.

"The *Floors o' the Forest*."

"Play awa' than."

And Robert played—not so well as he had hoped. I daresay it was a humble enough performance, but he managed at least to give something of the expression that Mr. Lammie had been desiring. For, the moment he had finished, he exclaimed,

"Weel dune, Robert man! ye'll be a fiddler some day, yet!"

And Robert was well satisfied with the praise.

"I wish yer mother had been alive," the farmer went on. "She wad hae

been rael prood to hear ye play like that. Eh! she likit the fiddle weel. And she culd play bonny upo' the piana hersel'. It was something to hear the twa o' them playin' thegither, him on the fiddle—that verra fiddle o' 's father's 'at ye hae i' yer han'—and her on the piana. Eh! but she was a bonnie wuman as ever I saw, an' that quaiet! It's my belief she never thocht about her ain beowty frae week's en' to week's en', and that's no sayin' little—is 't, Aggy?"

"I never preten't to hae ony o' 't mysel' to think aboot," returned Miss Lammie, with a mild indignation.

"That's richt, lass. Od, ye're aye i' the richt, though I say 't 'at sudna."

Miss Lammie must indeed have been good-natured, for her only answer to his rudeness was a very respectable attempt at a laugh. Shargar looked on the point of attacking Mr. Lammie. But Robert would fain hear more of his mother.

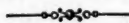
"What was my mother like, Mr. Lammie?"

"Eh, my man! ye suld hae seen her upon a bonnie bay mere that yer father gae her. Faith! she sat as straught as a rash, wi' jist a hing i' the heid o' her, like the heid o' a halm o' wild aits."

"My father wasna that ill till her than?" suggested Robert.

"Wha ever daured to say sic a thing?" returned Mr. Lammie, but in a tone so far from satisfactory to Robert, that he asked no more questions in that direction.

I need hardly say that from that night till he returned to Rothieden, Robert was more than ever diligent with his violin.



A GERMAN UNIVERSITY TOWN.

BY AN IDLE TRAVELLER.

I.

I WENT, last spring, according to a long-standing promise, to spend a few weeks with an English friend married to a German gentleman, a native of Heidelberg. By her directions I took the Great Luxemburg Railway from Brussels, leaving Trèves and the Moselle on the left, and passing up the lovely valley of the Saar, through the rich coal-field around Saarbrücken (what a pity it is that coal districts have generally so much beauty to be spoilt!) and across the Pfalz to Mannheim, in which peculiarly uninteresting "Residenz" I expected to be forced to pass the night, only fifteen miles from my journey's end. But good fortune (in the shape of an opera-train) awaited me, and I reached Heidelberg at half-past ten P.M., just as my friend had given me up. By the bright moonlight I had a faint glimpse of a broad street and a line of tall houses with trees in front of them, but I was by no means prepared for the scene which greeted my opening eyes next morning. My friend's house was on the "Anlage," or Esplanade of Heidelberg; and from my window, *au quatrième*, I looked down on a broad

carriage-road, flanked, on the side opposite the houses, by a double avenue of scarlet horse-chestnut trees, in gorgeous bloom, extending east and west as far as my eyes could reach. Beyond this avenue (which forms the fashionable summer promenade) were the public gardens—all ablaze with lilacs, laburnums, and early roses; beyond these, on a terrace bordered by standard roses, a line of railway issuing from an arch of the rich rosy-red sandstone used here for all public buildings (and though evidently not long built, overrun by luxuriant ferns and ivy); then a house or two, embowered in a perfect paradise of roses, laburnums, westerias, and vines; and lastly, close behind these, the mountain-side, rising like a wall of greenery, so steep and so high that I was forced to put my head out of the window in order to see any sky. To the right I perceived more gardens, with here and there a large grand-looking house (for the custom of living in "flats" is a wonderful improver of domestic architecture), and I even caught a glimpse of the sea-like plain I had traversed in the darkness of the preceding night, fringed with blossoming cherry-trees, like foam on the breaking waves. To the left all was dazzling, blinding sunshine, with a vision of wooded summits, clothed in the morning mist; and, standing boldly out, apparently on a lower rocky promontory, a dark-red frowning mass, with no visible marks of ruin, vast and stately, which I knew must be the castle. Of course, to the castle was my first pilgrimage, and a weary one I found it. Along the dusty *Anlage*, with the afternoon sun *pouring* on our heads (for it is in the afternoon that the band plays, and that "every one" goes to hear it); across the railway, and under a fine old arch; up, and up, and up, between tall, quaint, dirty old houses on the left, and a rocky wall on the right, overhung with ferns and lilac-bushes; up a narrow paved street, *swarming* with children, steep as a mountain torrent bed, and without a glimpse of scenery to beguile the way; at last we reached the entrance to the castle-gardens, and passing under the massive gateway, turned at once to the left, through the singular "oak-tree" portico, into the Electress Elizabeth's private garden, in front of that part of the castle known as the "*Englische-Bau*," because built and fitted up expressly for the English princess. This part of the grounds is little frequented, and is therefore left to run wild, or nearly so. The eastern side looks on the drawbridge, and is shut in by the magnificent trees growing in the moat (of course the moat is now almost, or quite dry, and the drawbridge solid masonry); but on the west the ancient descent to the town has been blown away by gunpowder, and the rock goes sheer down some hundreds of feet into the valley, leaving the view unobstructed over city, river, and plain, to where a distant gleam at the foot of a blue line of mountains marks the majestic flow of Father Rhine. I shall not attempt to describe the scene; it is substantially the same as that which has been so often painted from the "*Altan*," a little lower down; but this was my first sight of it, and though I have seen some of the finest scenery in Europe, I can remember only twice experiencing an impression so overpowering. Long did I sit gazing, almost doubting the reality of the prospect before me, till my friend reminded me that it was a "band-day," and if we wished to see the fashionable world of Heidelberg, we must go to the spot where the band was playing. Accordingly, we left

the "Englische-Bau," passed the Grand Entrance and the "Gesprengte-Thurm," and soon found ourselves in one of those peculiarly German scenes of gaiety, so odd and so amusing to an English eye. Imagine a space surrounded on three sides by trees (around and above which the mountains recede in a regular semicircle, fashioned by the hand of art, and clothed to the summit with luxuriant woods), and open on the fourth, which slopes down to the river. On two sides are light open kiosks, one for shelter in case of rain, the other for the sale of refreshments. Half the square is occupied by a lawn, tastefully planted, with groups of rare and beautiful shrubs, judas-trees, magnolias, acacias, &c., surrounding a fountain; and the other half filled with tables and chairs, where some hundreds of well-dressed individuals, of both sexes and of all ages, are sitting at their ease, some taking coffee, and a few wine, but by far the greater number (*ladies* as well as gentlemen) drinking their schoppens or half-schoppens of beer, as they knit or smoke, according to their sex, chat, and listen to the music. This much may be seen perhaps in any German town; but Heidelberg has one distinctive and very enlivening feature—namely, the students and their dogs. Now, I am free to confess that my idea of a German student was a bloused and beer-drinking animal, with long yellow hair, spectacles, and a long pipe; but for such a specimen, when we had taken our seats, I looked in vain. "Beer-drinking" was a description which might apply to nearly all there; *elderly* gentlemen with spectacles, and even with long hair, one may see everywhere; but the blouse and the long pipe were gone, and I saw nothing that in any way resembled the picture I had in my mind's eye of a "Bursch;" so I turned to my friend with—"Where are the students?"

"There, and there, and there; don't you see their caps? All those are 'Corps-studenten.'"

"Oh!" said I, feeling rather bewildered at this upsetting of all my previous notions, "and why do they wear those fancy caps? they surely are not academical costume."

"Academical costume!" repeated my friend, laughing; "much they would care for that! The colour of the cap marks the corps to which the student belongs, and I believe the shape denotes his standing in the corps—the white, of which you see so many, are the 'Preussen,' who seem to be very numerous this term; the dark-green, 'Westphalen;' the red, 'Vandalen;' the yellow, 'Schwaben;' and the blue, 'Rhenaner;' besides [some white, red, and blue with different coloured bands, which belong to the 'Verbindungen;' but I am not thoroughly acquainted with those."

I took another survey of the various groups. "They seem very gentlemanly young men," I remarked, with some surprise, "and some of them extremely good-looking; they might be Oxonians, even Christ Church men, I declare!"

"It would be strange if they were not," said my friend, "for they belong to the first families, not only of Germany, but of all Europe. No student who is not 'noble' can be admitted to a Corps, at least in theory; of course there are exceptions to the literal rule. Young Englishmen of good families are sometimes to be found in the white, green, and red Corps; I believe there are none just now, but two or three of that group are Americans."

"Americans! Oh, indeed!" said I, with a look and tone which perhaps conveyed more than I intended, and certainly amused my companion.

"My dear Kate," said she, "I thought you prided yourself on your freedom from insular prejudices, and yet the very word 'American' acts like a bit of red rag in bringing out all your latent John Bullism. If you could have seen your own face a minute ago!" and again she laughed,—as I thought very unfairly.

"Now, Bessie, you know very well that in the old days I always had to defend the Yankees against you."

"Yes, but you see we have both lived to modify our views; at any rate, yours will not find favour *here*, for I assure you Americans are much more popular on the continent than English; and I must own, I fear, deservedly so."

At this point our conversation was interrupted by a large dog, which came bounding up, and thrust his nose into my lap, a proof of confidence it was impossible to resist, so I gave him some cake, and patted his huge and not very pretty head, and we were rapidly advancing to intimacy, when I heard "Kate, Kate," in warning tones from Mrs. S. I looked up, and there stood a "Prussian," with a chain in his hand, and on his face a mixture of dismay and amusement which I shall never forget. Evidently the dog had broken loose, and he was speedily marched off to a distant table, where I saw two or three others, all with collars and chains, lying at their masters' feet.

"Why do they keep all those fine dogs chained?" I asked.

"It is the only condition on which any student is allowed to have a dog in Heidelberg, and I suppose it is on account of the restriction that we see so many. You see it is the nearest possible approach to a forbidden pleasure. But how you can call those dogs '*fine*' I cannot imagine; it is a proverb that there is only one thorough-bred race of dogs in the University, and that is the turnspit."

"I used 'fine' in the sense of 'large,' and you know you are no fair critic, because you don't like dogs; I do, and I study their countenances almost as much as 'the human face divine.' Many of those great creatures have very good faces, though I should be puzzled to know what to call them. But look there! you will not call *that* noble animal a mongrel."

"No," replied my friend, "that really is a magnificent specimen; I know him well by sight, and I believe he is a Hungarian. Do you see, his training is so perfect that he walks loose behind his master, and the authorities wink at it!"

"Who *are* the authorities here?" I inquired.

"Those men in green uniforms, employed by the 'Schlosswirthschaft' to see that no unfair advantage is taken by the public of all the amusement provided for them. If any one walks on the turf, or touches the flowering shrubs, or in any way misconducts himself, those men immediately interfere; but I must say it is seldom they have to do so."

"And what is the 'Schlosswirthschaft'?" I thought 'Wirthschaft' meant housekeeping?"

"Oh! here it means *management* of any sort. We should perhaps call the body a 'Committee of management,' for they keep up these gardens

(and really they are beautifully kept, every tree and shrub being labelled, as you see, with its name and native country), provide music and refreshments four days in every week, and in the summer they double the band every now and then and give a regular concert. But even the ordinary music is good; just listen now to that 'Lohengrin' march; they are playing it beautifully!"

"Indeed they are, who are the musicians?"

"Part of the 'Stadt-orchester;' you will hear more of them when the 'Réunions' begin at the Museum. I think, however, you have had enough of this place; let us take a turn till the music begins again."

So saying, Bessie rose, and I followed her away from the gardens, along the terrace which looks down the valley, and then by various winding, shady walks, up and down, and around the castle, catching fresh and beautiful views at every turn.

"I had no idea so much of the building was left standing," I remarked, as we looked up at the massive pile half buried in rich foliage. "Why, it looks as if it might still be inhabited."

"Some portion is so, and, in fact, there are rooms fitted up over the great gateway and let to visitors; but it must be an uncomfortable lodging in spite of all its grand and picturesque associations."

"Or rather *because* of them," rejoined I, laughing. "I think the ghosts of the past would not leave *me* much rest. Where is the Great Tun? shall I see it to day?"

"Under the central portion of the castle, between the 'Chapel,' so well known from Louis Haghe's drawing, and the 'Englische Bau.' I think we had better defer going there for the present, the vaults are very chilly in early summer. But come through the Entrance-gateway to the 'Altan;' you must see the finest of all our views before we return home."

As we passed again before the "Gesprengte Thurm," I could not help lingering to look on that stupendous ruin, which every one, artist and amateur, tries to paint,—every one to fail in turn. The huge fragment which lies in the moat entire, as if hewn out of solid rock, and overgrown with its lovely profusion of wood and wild flowers, always reminded me of Sir Walter Scott's description of the fairy Castle of St. John in the "Bridal of Triermain." As we stood there we were joined by Mrs. S.'s eldest son, a fine boy of thirteen.

"Oh, mamma," said he, "I have been looking everywhere for you, and now I suppose you have shown Miss M. all the lions without me."

"No, Harry, I do not think I have trenched on your privileges at all; I did not even point out your friend the 'Binsen-bube,' though he tried to catch my eye. There he is again, bowing and gesticulating."

I looked in the direction indicated by my friend, and saw a most extraordinary looking man, with a large botanical box slung over his shoulder, full of exquisite little bouquets of roses and lilies of the valley. This strange figure advanced, grinning, bowing, scraping, and offering his bouquets, with what Shakspeare would have called "*mops and mows*," and I was on the point of investing in one, though they were extravagantly dear, had not my

friend warned me that if I did so I should never be free from his importunity as long as I remained in Heidelberg. "And I assure you," added she, "it becomes quite an annoyance at last."

"But oh, mamma, he is such fun!"

"To you I dare say, Harry, but I don't think Kate will care to take lessons in the art of facial contortion. He is, however, so completely a part of Heidelberg, that you may see his portrait in the shop-windows, with a great bundle of the reeds (*Binsen*) from which he derives his soubriquet."

"Reeds!" I exclaimed, "what is the use of them?"

"In the days of long pipes, now happily no more, the man gained a livelihood by gathering and selling to the students the long reeds or rushes used for cleaning the tubes, and he is still known by the name he then acquired of 'Binsen-bube.' He is, I believe, by no means so crack-brained as he chooses to appear, and is said to have amassed a considerable sum of money. But come, it is past six o'clock, and we really must go home."

As we passed under the great gateway, where the portcullis still shows its iron teeth overhead, Harry called my attention to a huge iron ring on the massive gate.

"Now, Miss M., you will never have another chance! If you can bite through this ring, before you pass the gateway, the Castle is yours! Won't you try?"

I assured my young friend that I had no ambition to possess so encumbered an estate, and tried to gain more light on this curious tradition, but I could only learn that it is believed by the peasantry about almost every old castle in Germany. We did not stay long on the Altan, but made our way by what was once a secret passage through the Castle vaults, and down steep shaded walks into the heart of the town, coming out on the University Square, where Harry told me the students "burn their torches" after a "Fackelzug," to the solemn strains of "*Gaudeamus-igitur*." "And, mamma, they were saying at the Lyceum that there is to be a Fackelzug to-night, for the Prussians will hold an 'Eintritts-commerz,' and Miss M. will be able to see it from our windows!"

"I wish, for her sake, it may prove so, Harry; but I fear there is little chance. The evenings are too light for a Fackelzug."

"What is an Eintritts-commerz?" I asked; but just then my friend pointed up a narrow cross-street, exclaiming: "Look! look! the *Abendroth*!" It was, indeed, a glorious sight, to see that lovely roseate hue steal over the mountain-side till every object, rock and ruin, buildings and foliage, was steeped in sunset glory; and then to watch the colour fading upwards into twilight grey, as the sun sank and left the mighty hills standing out dark against the pale-blue sky. But it was now decidedly cold, and we hurried on, past the "Jesuiten-kirche," the Ludwigs-platz, and the "Petri-kirche," embosomed in lilacs and laburnums, where rests the body of the fair and good and gifted Olympia Morata, and we found ourselves at home just as the lamps were lighted on the Anlage.

I felt that I had seen and heard enough for one day, and Bessie and I sat in the moonlight, talking over old times, with the windows open, for the

night was mild. I had heard occasional snatches of song from one of the houses opposite, but in Germany that is so common a circumstance, that I had not particularly noticed it. Suddenly, however, my attention was arrested by a well-known strain, and at least twenty voices burst out into one of my own favourite songs: "Heil dem Manne der den grünen Hain!" I started up, and flew to the window, when I perceived a room in a little tavern at the foot of the mountain lighted up, and with the shadows of a numerous party cast on the blinds. From this room the voices proceeded; they were not remarkably sweet, but they kept tune and time, as Germans always do, and they sang the beautiful "Jägerlied" with a spirit I had never heard equalled; and though distant at least fifty yards from the singers, I could follow the words with ease, as they rang through the clear air from the open windows. When the song was over, I turned to Mrs. S. for an explanation.

"Oh!" said she, carelessly, "that is the Prussians at their Kneipe. They always hold it at that little inn, the 'Riesenstein,' so called from the name of the mountain which towers above. We are so used to their singing, we never notice it; but if you like it, I can promise you plenty. I think to-night must be a Freinacht, as they have an instrumental accompaniment, and, by-the-bye, Harry said there was to be an Eintritts-commerz; in that case, it will go on till midnight. It is a pity they have lost all their best singers this term; last year there were some splendid voices among them."

"What is a 'Kneipe,' and a 'Freinacht,' and an 'Eintritts-commerz?' Please recollect my ignorance, and don't talk Greek without explaining yourself."

"A 'Kneipe' here means what I suppose we should in England call a Club. In former days it meant, as elsewhere, a mere drinking place; but now the standard of 'gentlemanliness' is raised, in Germany as at home; and though the corps regulations are still stringent as to beer, and the number of *schoppens* swallowed on special occasions are something awful to contemplate, I am bound to say that the 'Preussen' are all gentlemen, and the noise they make is generally to be attributed only to exuberant animal spirits. Each corps has its own Kneipe, and this has been the resort of the Prussians from time immemorial. They are bound to disperse by ten o'clock on ordinary nights, under penalty of a heavy fine on themselves and the landlord; but on a Freinacht they may stay till half-past eleven."

I thought I was fated not to hear of the Eintritts-commerz, for the music struck up again, this time that lovely wild "Wanderlied," which, as it requires more delicate singing, certainly received less justice at the hands of the young gentlemen opposite. When this ended, I saw the shadow at the top of the table rise, glass (or rather, tankard) in hand, and begin a speech, of which the words—"Ich habe die Ehre," were distinctly audible. The speech was long and the applause hearty, followed by a general clinking of glasses, and then by a proceeding which altogether mystified me. A tall shadow arose from his place on the further side of the table, and deliberately stepping upon it, strode over to the president's left hand, where he apparently subsided into another seat, for I never saw him re-cross. Whilst we were wondering what this could mean, the musicians, after a short prelude, began that strange and beautiful air known as "Weihelied" by all connoisseurs in

"Studenten-lieder,"—the whole party joined heartily in the ringing chorus, and I was listening eagerly for the second verse, when the strain changed into something I did not know,—succeeded, after a single verse, by "Stosstan! Heidelberg lebe!" which, in its turn, gave place to another, and another, and another, to the number of fifteen different songs, each caught up at once by the students, and sung faster and faster, till I was giddy with the attempt to follow them, although almost all the songs were old friends. One exception there was to the single verse, viz., the "Grosse Lied von Blücher,"—evidently such a favourite that the students held on the chorus, and utterly declined to notice the sweet strains of "Loreley," (which came next in order), until they had sung another verse, and doubled the chorus to *that* also in a most uproarious style. I must say the idea occurred to me that it was perfectly needless thus to apprise the neighbourhood that "*Die Deutschen sind da*,"—as no one within half a mile could be left in any doubt of the fact, nor of the other circumstances so vociferously announced, "*Die Deutschen sind lustig, sie rufen, burrah!*" However, the medley came to an end at last, and then Bessie's husband, who had joined us, told me it was called a "charivari," or "quodlibet," and proceeded to give me a dissertation on "Studenten-lieder" and "Studenten-leben" in general. From him I learned that the "Corps-studenten" constituted but a small portion of the University;—the whole number of students being about eight hundred,—of whom perhaps one hundred belong to the five corps. The "Preussen" are chiefly, though not exclusively, from the north of Germany, the "Westphalen" from Austria and the east—these are the two *most* aristocratic bodies; the "Vandalen," also, are very gentlemanly young men, but less exclusive than the two former; the "Schwaben" are scions of the principal families in Baden, and the "Rhenaner" he believed to be recruited from the smaller States, but of them he knew little. The "Prussians" are the undisputed leaders of society, and this to an extent perfectly inexplicable to us English, accustomed to regard our Oxonians and Cantabs rather as the "raw material" out of which gentlemen are to be developed, than as already formed and polished. The utmost ambition of a party-giving lady is to have even a single Prussian at her ball, but I was gravely assured that it would be "an insult to the whole corps" to invite a Prussian, unless you could promise "a cotillon and ices!" Dr. S. spoke very highly of the "Westphalen," who mix in society less than the "Preussen," but are not on that account to be supposed more studious; he said, however, that if Harry ever joined a corps, it would be he "Schwaben," as their regulations did not absolutely *exclude* study!

"Exclude study!" said I; "then how on earth do those corps-studenten spend their time at the university?"

"Chiefly in fighting; diversified by smoking, beer-drinking, and dancing—with as much flirting as the English ladies will provide for them."

"Oh! Herr Professor! that is too bad!"

"Well," said he, laughing, "wait, and judge for yourself how the English spoil the Prussians."

"And quite right, too!" said I; "I would do the same, if thereby I could get some of these lovely *Lieder*. Just listen now; what a sweet air!"

"Yes, that is from 'Czar und Zimmermann;' but they are not singing it

well, Miss M. Don't you remember last term, Bessie, how sweetly they used to sing that song?"

"I dare say they did, my dear," replied Bessie; "I know I used to wish them somewhere else, when they kept me awake every Saturday night."

Whereupon the Professor turned to me, and went off into a rhapsody on the subject of his own student days, which would not be interesting at second-hand. All this time the songs were going on at intervals—with speeches, and cheering, and walking round (and over) the table to clink glasses; and in the still night air we could catch sometimes even the words they *said*, but nearly always those they *sang*. One couplet I heard so often repeated that I fancied it must be equivalent to our time-honoured "And he is a jolly good fellow;" indeed, unless my ears deceived me, the first line was, "Und ist er ein braver Bub!" but I never could find out whether my idea was correct. It appeared they were holding an "Eintritts-commerz," *i.e.*, an extraordinary meeting at the opening of term, to initiate new members, and arrange various matters connected with the corps—of what nature I leave my readers (as I was left) to guess. On such an occasion they had, of course, a Freinacht, and long after I had retired to rest I heard the music at intervals, and at last the voices of the students as they dispersed in different directions to their lodgings.



NOTES ON POETRY AND POETS.

IN a little paper entitled "George Eliot and Poetry," I promised, upon another occasion, to say something of what appeared to me the most obvious defects of recent poetry, considered as versification. However hastily and roughly that promise may now be fulfilled in the present paper, enough will I hope be said to make the subject interesting even to unaccustomed readers, who do not care much about poetry.

My opinion, stated briefly, is, that in spite of the beautiful finish of the work of the Laureate (not forgetting Mr. Allingham and Mr. M. Arnold, the latter of whom has, however, a gamut of narrow compass), we have been growing very rough and careless with our versification, and that, in particular, we have almost forgotten that fulness of *vowel*-music which was once a characteristic of English poetry. I attribute this partial degradation of the most precious and articulate of the arts to the influence of Wordsworth (who wrote some very bad verse indeed) upon a generation in which there is over-much poetic literature, and, naturally, much hasty poetic work from writers who, though not without poetic vision, have not the "passionate patience" without which good poetry cannot be produced. Miss Jean Ingelow is a melodious writer; and, across the Atlantic, Mr. James Russell Lowell is a true poet, quite under-estimated by the generality of British readers: his "Vision of Sir Launfal" I have never lost a chance of praising, and a hint which I gave years ago as to its admirable fitness for illustration has lately

been taken—but nothing, or scarcely anything, can excuse lines like the majority of the following:—

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us ;

The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,

The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,

We bargain for the graves we lie in ;

At the devil's booth are all things sold,

Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold ;

For a cap and bells our lives we pay,

Bubbles we earn with a whole soul's tasking ;

'Tis heaven alone that is given away,

'Tis only God may be had for the asking.

If it were not that a certain shade of deliberate grotesque in the thought may here be held to demand a shade of grotesque in the expression, this would be *wholly* bad ; as it is, the worst of the lines nearly knock your teeth out. Roughness of expression—but measured and calculated—belongs naturally to grotesque effect : it may be a source of humour in some cases : it may be used for specific ends in others—to arrest the voice and compel a poised delivery, or to set up a foil to more musical lines ; but a writer like Mr. Lowell does himself and his readers great injustice when, by careless collocations of vowels and consonants, he half-spoils the fine quality of pathetic rhythm—the pulse, which his poetry so often has. And the case is typical.

In that odd jumble the Appendix to his *Pericles and Aspasia*, Landor said that there was more music in *Paradise Lost* [or one book of it?] than had ever been heard in the world since the angels sang at its creation ! I quote this Landorish speech, not because it is true, but because it may serve to give those who have not considered the subject some idea of the immense importance which good judges attach to verse as something which is of the *essence* of poetry. There are not wanting signs of a reaction in the direction of this thought, following upon the decay of the purely literary influence of Wordsworth (his moral influence is still spreading both vertically and laterally) with his utter nonsense about the “accomplishment of verse.” You cannot unversify poetry. Somehow, an element of rhythm—call it what you like—*will* get in when the idea is poetic. Mr. Lewes said that if you were to reduce Mr. Buchanan's *Idylls of Inverburn* into prose, they would remain poems still. What Mr. Lewes intended to say is true, but the expression is inexact. All of metrical form which can be spared without injury to the thought is not true work ; but, in the case of anything which, being in metre, is a true poem, the removal of the metre is an injury against which the denuded thought exclaims.* In a story-poem, the mere sequence of incident itself involves a rhythm ; it is one of the most important portions of the poet's duty to dispose his “events” so as to produce harmony of effect, like colours in mosaic. Verse or no verse, *this* remains ; but poetic feeling will

* I had written “the denuded thought cries out,” but instantly erased the “cries out,” and wrote “exclaims ;” the reason being that the word “out” following the word “thought” so rapidly, would have offended the ear. I commit many worse faults in writing than the one I just now corrected ; but there is no harm, I hope, in my making this little reference, by way of illustration : for one sees far worse things in writing called poetry.

insinuate rhythmic movement into the style besides. Why, or at least how, the quality of verse is essential to poetry, I will endeavour to hint in a moment, however imperfectly. In the meanwhile, I agree with Mr. W. M. Rossetti in the following expression of opinion:—"This power over verse, as it is one of the most primary, so also do we regard it as one of the most final tests of a true poetic vocation—especially when displayed on a large scale, and with great variety of adaptation. Other powers may be preferred for dignity or value: *none is more of the essence of the art of poetry, or so positively discriminates that from all other forms of art.* None therefore is more essential to the poet, or more symptomatic of his rank." [This last clause is debateable, unless careful stress be laid upon the *more*].

I may add, in passing, that rhythm of conception in story-telling is a point upon which the general reader is usually without a single idea. Yet every good poetic story partakes of the nature of the epic or the drama, and the most characteristic portion of the work lies in the order in which the poet disposes the facts. To the reader they are presented in succession; but the poet conceives his story as in a map—as to its essence, in one flash of thought—in which it is scarcely possible for the most critical self-consciousness to detect a voluntary element at all—if at all.

But to return to verse, in its ordinary signification. Mr. Ruskin says, somewhere, that five of his pages are not more than equal to one of Tennyson's or Carlyle's. Let us leave out Carlyle for the present, and consider the case as one of prose-value compared with verse-value. Mr. Ruskin has written prose which is nearer poetry than any living Englishman's—perhaps nearer poetry than any Englishman's that ever lived, except Jeremy Taylor, Milton, and Donne. But would not any lover of poetry part with all his prose rather than with one single good lyric of poor John Clare's? Nay, hard as it seems to put such a case, and long as I should linger over it, I sadly fear (fear!) I should, if sore pressed, let even all Richter go, rather than part with a perfect poem. But do not let us damage our case by asking too much; let us be content with asking, why is it that a beautiful little poem seems so much more valuable, and affects us so much more than a good deal of beautiful poetry-prose?

The reason lies in the directness of the relation which verse bears to our emotions. Good verse is not jingle merely; it is the machinery by which the poet, taught by a divine instinct, and helped by art and study, reproduces, in a sufficient degree, the vibrations which accompany our deepest feelings. He awakens, by the *beat* of his song, a reminiscence of the rhythm or beat of the feeling to which his song relates. The subtler and more searching the art of his versification, the more perfectly he arouses those inner subtleties of emotional vibration which we crudely discern in their more obvious signs, in the rocking of grief, the pealing of laughter, and the recurring spasms and quiverings of terror. The more inflexible his habitual mood the worse he does this; e.g., Wordsworth. The more flexible his moods, the better; e.g., Shakspeare, Shelley, Campbell. On the one hand, no amount of wealth of poetical conception will make a man generally successful as a poet without this power; on the other, a poet whose imaginative stock in trade is small, may powerfully affect us by the music of his verse, by its accurate adjustment to emo-

tive needs; e.g. Campbell. How many "ideas" are there in the "Battle of the Baltic," or "Hohenlinden," or "Lord Ullin's Daughter?" Campbell professed to depreciate "Hohenlinden," and said it was "d——d drum-and-trumpet lines;" but he knew better all the while. And the world knows better.

The reader now sees what I meant in the former paper by saying that the production of good verse was an exhausting occupation. No verse can be good that does not by its rhythm awaken the proper emotional vibrations; and these, with all their attendant fatigue, must of course have been gone through by the poet in getting into the necessary swing and beat of that rhythm. There is a story—almost ludicrous, but, I believe, well authenticated—that Cowper composed his "Toll for the Brave," while frantically pulling at the bell-rope of his room! Some years ago a living writer, referring to the generally understood fact that Mr. Tennyson composes with labour, made game of the idea that the author of a poem like "In Memoriam," should "sweat over longs and shorts." Questions of "longs" and "shorts" appertain only to the grammar of an art which transcends its grammar (and yet must have it); but Mr. Tennyson has since given the world to understand that he does "sweat over longs and shorts," even in the lower sense. John Clare knew nothing, by the grammar, of "longs" and "shorts;" but even his (so-called) artless lyrics were no more composed without physical rhythmic excitement than the "Lotos Eaters," or "Christabel," or the central chorus in "Philoctetes," (pp. 54 to 59). But I must stop; the subject is endless. Yet I will add this. People often wonder how it is that a hymn which is a jumble of bad metaphor and debated theology (e.g., Toplady's "Rock of Ages") affects the mind. The answer is—by its natural strong rhythm or beat; having probably been composed, though perhaps unconsciously, to some favourite familiar congregational tune.

The place which vowel-music occupies in good verse is a subject at which I can only hint: giving just one or two illustrations which may serve to show readers who have never thought of such a subject that there is really something in it. Read the following verse:—

When daisies pied and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight.

You have a vague sense of musical beauty at once. You notice at once that a song in iambics is somehow made to have all the elasticity of dactylic measures you note the sweet-flowing cadence—"silver-white." But when all this is done, there remains in the ear an echo of open vowel-sounds profusely thrown in by the poet. Now, to say that Shakspeare *meant* to express the flower-dotted field by a crowded variety of vowel sounds would be capricious; but that the inscrutable instinct of the poet made him do it, I maintain:—

WhEn dAISies pIEd and vIOlets bLUE,
And lADy-smOcks All sILver WhItE,
And cUckOO bUDs of yELLOW hUE,
DO pAInt the mEAdOWs with dELight.

This manner of printing the verse brings out distinctly to the eye the effect

which before was confined to the ear—an effect, by-the-by, closely connected with some points to be noticed another day in our best old madrigal music.

But there is now no room to do more than offer two other illustrations of my meaning. The first is from that exquisite master of his art, Campbell. Read this:—

How glorious is thy girdle, cast
O'er mountain, tower, and town;
Or mirror'd in the ocean vast,
A thousand fathoms down!

This catches the ear, and stays with it. But why? Let us print the verse differently:—

HOW glOrious is thy girdle, cAst
O'Er mOUtain, tOWer, and tOWn;
Or mirror'd in the Ocean vAst,
A thOUsand fathoms dOWn!

We have now brought out the fact that, instinctively, the infinite arch of the rainbow being his subject, the poet had recourse to a profusion of such vowel-sounds as must be spoken *ore rotundo*. That Campbell had some consciousness of what he was doing I have no doubt whatever: though I do not believe that Shakspeare had any.

One more illustration. In *Macmillan's Magazine* the other day, Mr. Palgrave quoted Keats as having written "the music groaning like a god in pain." My copy of the "Eve of St. Agnes" gives "yearning;" and, turning instinctively to my book-shelf, I took down Keats, and soon found myself reading through that poem, and "Hyperion" too. But, in going through the "Eve of St. Agnes," my mental ear was decisively arrested by the following passage, which had long dwelt in my mind, giving a confused half-impression of peculiarity of structure:—

Awakening up, he took her *hollow lute*
Tumultuous.

What is there peculiar, then, in the three last words? There is a delicate remote suggestion of the sound of a touched viol in them; but how did it come there? Of course there is plenty of the letter L—that "goes without to say" when melody is in question. The word "hollow," too, is very pretty; involving a breath of air, and the short and the long O conjoined by a double liquid, which has nearly as soft an effect as the L *mouillée* of the French; the *gl* of the Italians; or the *ñ contilde* of the Spaniards. But that is not all, or the chief of what, with such delicate reserve, suggests lute music. This lies partly in the repetition of the letter T:—

Took her . . . luTe Tumultuous.

But still more in the repetition of the vowel U:—

lUte tUmUltU . . . OUS.

The O U, being in sound, short U.

Criticism of this kind may easily descend into trivialities; but not very easily, if it confines itself to the work of good poets. Writing in haste, I

have yet said enough to open the eyes of the general reader to the fact that there is a good deal more in verse than an "accomplishment" which can be spared. Good verse is not the dress, but the body of the thought, in good poetry: and is directly related to its power of exciting our feelings. For fluency, the poet relies chiefly on his choice of consonants; for volume and gravity upon his choice of vowels. The general reader may think it all the same whether Mr. Matthew Arnold should write—as he did not—

O thou just vizier, send away
The cloth merchants;

or, again, as he did not—

O justest vizier, send away
The cloth merchants;

or, as he did—

O mOst just vizier, send away
The cloth merchants.

But it is plain, when once pointed out, how much is gained in solemnity of effect by beginning the verse, not only with a spondee (for which either version does) but with a direct repetition of the same broad open vowel. My own opinion is that for some time past we have got into a way of thinking of poetry too little in connection with its first essential quality as *cantabile*—its singableness—and, consequently, into some neglect of the resources supplied by our language for that magnificent openness of vocalisation, of which we have seen few instances since the days when Milton insisted on putting rowling, where we now put rolling. One of the happiest recent examples of a better poetic tone, in respect of voluminous sound, is the beautiful drama of "Philoctetes." The great musical power of Mr. Swinburne has been sufficiently praised, perhaps—at all events, it has been recognised. But "Philoctetes" has scarcely received its due. MATTHEW BROWNE.

MOTHERS' DAUGHTERS.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

I AM not a marrying man myself, and I don't profess to understand people's matrimonial affairs. There is a man I know who is always praising his wife, and I have seen him shake his fist at her; it may be a private signal of affection, or he may like her just because she lets him punch her head.

There was another, one of ours, in fact; when he was first married he used to cry when he met anybody, absolutely cry, as though he had a cold in his head; said it was because he was "so wappy." He was a bilious fellow, and died of jaundice not long after. Perhaps his "wappiness" had something to do with it. I don't go in for first causes, it's infidel, you know, and infidelity isn't the thing, doesn't pay, in fact; besides, they put me through my inductive philosophy too young,—mind was not porous enough, so that some stuck, and bothers me now sometimes like the stump of a tooth. I am glad to forget it as much as possible.

I hope you have not lost the thread of my argument, because I have, quite; but I think it was something like this: that, though no Benedict now, I never see a poor fellow going to the—ahem—altar, without fervently ejaculating, "There goes John Foozy, but for the blessing of Mothers' Daughters."

My first escape was with, or from, a Miss Gregson—Sarah Ann Gregson. A capital girl to take down to dinner, *en famille*; she would fix her eyes—fine fleshy eyes they are, too—fix them on one special cut of grouse, and pass the plates down till she got it. I really honoured that girl for the native genius with which she managed her appetite; honoured her till I had begun to soliloquize,—and soliloquy is always a fatal symptom, you know; means that only yourself and one other can understand,—to soliloquize, "Jack, my boy, that woman would know how to breakfast a fellow."

Mrs. Gregson intervened: "Mr. Foozy,"—she calls me "Mister Foozy" five times a minute, that woman. Why I go to the house I don't know; she says it is because our ancestors swore friendship in the Eternal Past, but I don't believe any of mine ever had capital enough to start in the sugar-boiling business, and that is where hers came from. "Mr. Foozy," she said, "would you not suppose my daughter Sarah enjoyed her dinner?"

"Well, I should," I answered.

"Ah! that is the force she puts upon herself; all acting, all acting."

"But I thought they only had pasteboard sandwiches on the stage," I suggested.

"Ah! the stage of life is so different, so different!"

"Yes," I said, "cleaner, perhaps; less dust and orange-peel."

"I don't mean that so much, Mr. Foozy, but the parts we have to play. Sarah Ann, for instance, comporting herself with that dry practicality, and all the while her real nature so romantic; so sweet, so sweet that I assure you, Mr. Foozy, she is positively, positively——"

"Sticky," I suggested.

"Yes, adhesive; only think of it."

I did think of it; an adhesive wife would be dreadful, like marrying an envelope; and she seemed such a jolly girl! only, to be sure, her mother must know best, women understand one another, they say.

Mrs. Gregson began again, "Full of enthusiasm,"—she said Foozyism, she was always neat at that kind of thing, that was how she managed old Gregson,—"full of Foozyism, all sentiment!"

That settled the business. I could not stand a sentimental woman. There was a man I knew, in fact he was a brother of mine, married one, and she was always having interviews with the ghost of a dead love; most unpleasant, you know; not to speak of the impropriety of the thing; worse than *Der Freischütz* with the blue lights on, and mutton chops frizzling in the background.

I was warned in time, and Sarah Ann looks at me sometimes as though I was a potato that had turned out colder than she expected.

My next escape was with Laura Fluff, a very different set; she had ancestors enough in all conscience; her father was Sir Phwlough Phwlough, of Phwloughholm, an entailed estate. I don't like women with money. We were all staying down at Worthington together. It's a nice little place;

Worthington; quiet, not shrimpy; with the sands all over small holes and bumps, where the worms come up; you get used to this in time, but at first it doesn't want the fat boy in *Pickwick* to make your flesh creep. We had a little place down by the sea, with a summer-house in the garden, where Laura and I used to sit and smoke; that is to say, I did; she didn't object to smoking, Laura didn't, didn't object to anything: judging from my experience of her, I should have said that she would not have uttered a protest, had you sewn her up in the bulb of a balloon, and set her floating to *Kamschatka*. A tranquil woman; I like such—a woman who will sit still to be looked at; they are generally worth it, and when they are not, one can forget them so soon. Really, being with Laura was almost as good as being with nobody; it was delicious. One sunny morning we sat for two hours and never spoke, till Laura asked, "Where have you been?"

"Nowhere," I said, ecstatically; "let us go there together."

At this precise moment Lady Fluff came down upon us, exclaiming, "You naughty, idle children!" Laura is thirty, if she's a day, and as to my age, I never can remember exactly. I have no head for statistics.

They seemed to understand one another, for Laura disappeared, somehow, like a dissolving view, and her mother took her place; she began at once,

"How can you make Laura so lazy? At home, she is activity itself—scolding the maids——"

"Dear me!" I interrupted, sorrowfully.

"Oh, only for their good, of course; those creatures really need it; with her papa and me she is all fun."

I shuddered; I always do shudder at a funny woman.

"First down to breakfast, a model of early rising," Lady Fluff continued. Now I never knew but two sane men who were fond of getting up early; one of them did it by sitting up all night, and the other turned out to be somebody else. I began to fear that Laura and I should disagree; her mother clenched the matter by winding up a peroration which I had not heard with the words "so energetic."

That was enough, I could not, I really could not, breathe near an energetic woman; I would as soon marry a hearth-brush. I had business in town next day, and never returned to Laura.

My next and last experience was with Phizzie Grey. I don't know—I never did know—what her real name was; they called her Phizzie, and the name became her, like everything else she had, or did, or didn't do. She used to sit at the piano and sing, like a bird in a toy-shop, a toy bird, you know; opening her little round mouth and puffing up her soft white neck, till, though there wasn't much sound, you felt it must be all there, she looked so pretty.

Phizzie never said anything but "Oh, yes," which is really all one wants a woman to say; a talking woman is only like a talking ape, a monstrosity to be set to work immediately.

Dear little Phizzie! she was such a soft white mouse of a pet, and, though I don't feel old yet, I shall some day, and it is pleasant to have a pair of gentle hands belonging to one; absolutely, even now, the thought takes the

bone out of me, somehow. For Phizzie was not real, of course, any more than the rest;—and it was her mother, like theirs, who enlightened me; showed her to me as that horror of horrors, a sensible woman; all over isms and abominations, bristling with missions and such grisly ghosts; a woman who would condone the cook's offences with a description of the repast of a Fiji Islander.

I do think, I really do think, that in these our days it would be desirable to adopt a modification of the Spartan practice, and put an end to every female infant that showed symptoms of growing up "sensible." I am not actively inhuman generally, but it does make me feel philanthropical when I remember my escapes from Mothers' Daughters.

CRIMPING SAILORS.

A SEQUEL TO "THE MARY JANE'S FORECASTLE."

WHEN the "Mary Jane" entered the West India Docks, the crew were as merry as larks, or like boys going home for the holidays, or big dogs frisking about in anticipation of being let off the chain. There is something in the sight of one's own native land, and in the touch of solid earth, after a long sea voyage, which untravelled landmen can hardly understand. The prospect of being at home overjoys the heart, elevates the spirits, and makes one wildly long to do something out of the way, to expend a happy energy on any kind of fun. So we were not long in making the ship fast, furling the sails, and coiling up the ropes. We had then done with the ship, and the ship had done with us. We had fulfilled our engagement, which lasted only for the voyage, and we were then turned adrift bag and baggage, or, more truly, chest and bedding. Such is the rule; and when we want to go to sea again, a new ship, with new officers, new owners, and new messmates must be sought. The cargo is discharged, and the new one shipped by lumberers and dock-labourers, whilst the sails and rigging are refitted by 'long-shore riggers, we sailors looking on out of work and out of wages. We thus lose, on an average, two or three months' work and pay every year.

But when the ship first arrives home we don't much think of these matters, being only too glad to set foot on dry land, and lose sight of the hateful fore-castle, with its scurvy-making provisions. It is time enough to look out for squalls when we want to raise the wind. Though turned out of the ship when she is secured, we neither receive our back wages, nor food and lodgings whilst waiting for them. Sailors never bring money into port with them, and seldom a stitch of clothes fit to walk the streets in, though well enough "rigged" for working on board. Now, I call it hard, that we should be turned adrift penniless, without house-room or food, and with a chest and bedding to carry, the moment the ship is fast, though five pounds, ten pounds, or even fifteen pounds, be due to us.

Scraper & Cheapjohn pocket the interest of our money during the four or five days their clerks are making up the accounts. As if the accounts for twenty men for five months couldn't be made up in as many hours instead of five days. In the queen's navy, when a ship is paid off, even with six hundred or a thousand men, the clerks get ten days to square up all the accounts for three or four years, and the men are lodged, fed, and paid up to the very evening the wages are actually received. Of course the queen's seamen work all those ten days in stripping the ship, and clearing the holds; but any part of their money is remitted for them to any place they choose, so that they needn't run the risk of carrying it in their hat. That isn't our way, however, and merchant sailors must hang about those iniquitous sinks near the docks, idle, for four or five days, without a scrap of meat or pay, waiting for their hard-earned back wages. Well, you see, a man must eat, and he must sleep, and when there is no work he must amuse himself. At least a sailor can't be idle, with his heart full of high spirits, and he can't be hanging about the streets and the places of amusement all alone, when he wants companionship, and has money coming to him that will pay for good clothes and all his needs.

A demand being thus created for food, raiment, and lodgings, with no ready money in hand, certain obliging gentlemen make it their business to supply these articles on credit; that is, on the security of the seaman's chest and bedding, his person and his coming pay. One of these kind gentlemen lives in a nice villa, out at our place, and drives into his business in his own carriage every morning. Mr. Barabbas is his name. So well thought of in our neighbourhood! His wife and daughters dress in silks and satins and jewelry, just like ladies, and pass for such grand people amongst the villagers. Mr. Barabbas's carriage takes him every morning to a nice large house near the docks, with large plate-glass windows, so beautifully papered and so well lighted at night that it seems a palace of a place after our fo'castles! Behind the house, a long room with grand chandeliers and looking-glasses, and tables and chairs so comfortable! You can't think how enjoyable it all looks after the "Mary Jane's" fo'castle! Mr. Barabbas keeps a number of bedrooms and lodging-houses in the back premises, under his eye, very convenient for his purpose. A number of other civil and obliging gentlemen are retained in Mr. Barabbas's pay, called "runners," who visit the ships when they arrive, and offer all the hospitalities of the "Seagull's Return," free of charge! quite as an act of friendship! only to be repaid when Scraper & Cheapjohn give us our money. Mr. Barabbas is deeply in love with this non-payment system, and wouldn't for the world that ship-owners should adopt ready money transactions with their seamen. The "Seagull's Return" retains the services of several other persons of engaging address, including a staff of Jew tailors to fit us out in clothes, boots, and hats, watches, watch chains, and rings, and all sorts of toggery; and a set of flashy, filthy women kept for the special advantage of sailors. A sailors' evening performance, and a great many more good things, are very disinterestedly provided to supply the want which the shipowners so obligingly create to Mr. Barabbas's profit.

The "Mary Jane's" crew had no sooner come down from aloft after furling sails, than they were inundated with a number of these most kind and obliging "runners," who knew exactly what a returning sailor wanted, and had just the very things at hand which they were on the look-out for. The sea-chests and bedding had all been corded up in readiness for quitting the ship, and these beaming, hospitable gentlemen had seized on our traps, and would have walked off with them and us. "Hold fast, though," says I; "once bit, twice shy; just leave my box alone, will you?" But I had to look sharp, for another good-natured stranger had it on his shoulders before I could look round. I made him drop it, though, pretty quick! However, he wasn't a bit angry, but offering a bottle of grog, painted the fine lodgings he had for me in the most enticing colours. It was the old story:—

"Will you come into my parlour?" says the Spider to the Fly;
It's the prettiest little parlour that ever you did spy."

But I knew Mr. Barabbas and his crew too well by sad experience, and had no notion of playing again the "seagull" to these "land-sharks." Besides, as I only lived a few miles out of London, I could have walked home, penniless as I was, but for my box and bedding, which I dared not leave out of my sight for a moment now the ship was alongside the dock, and there was no place of safety to put it in. So I asked a shipmate to keep an eye upon my traps whilst I went ast to the captain and asked for an advance of five shillings out of the five pounds coming to me. The skipper said he was in the same hobble himself, and wouldn't get any wages until the seamen did next week, so that he couldn't lend me a farthing. I told him I only wanted a shilling in the pound of what was due to me, just to get away from those rascally crimps who wanted to fleece me. He said that he couldn't help it, as *Scraper & Cheapjohn* never paid money on account, and that he and I must both wait till next week. I was now in despair, for I knew that if I once got into the hands of these crimps, I should never get out again until my wages and clothes were lost, when I should be kicked out of doors.

I had refused the drugged grog offered by the crimp, as it was only the first step towards placing me under an obligation and getting me into his clutches. Up comes the same smiling crimp offering some good English bread and butter, just as an act of kindness! Now I had not tasted such delicious bread for many months, and as I was getting somewhat hungry, my mouth watered so much at the prospect that I felt very much disposed to accept the offer. But I remembered from old experience that this was the shark still, though his teeth were turned back out of sight. The sea-shark has four or five rows of sharp triangular teeth working on hinges, which lie flat when he wants to be amiable, and stand erect when the prey is to be torn. Well, these land-sharks, the crimps, act much in the same fashion, and are most to be feared when most fawning. People who paint the devil black with cloven feet, make a great mistake, for the most dangerous devil is the one dressed so like an angel that you can't tell which is which. So I mustered up courage, and though yearning for the bread, I thanked the crimp civilly, but wouldn't taste it. Mistaking my civility, the crimp thought he

had gained a point upon me, so I gave him a bit of my mind, which made him sheer off and sail large for a little time. I then went aft once more, and begged the steward to help me out of my difficulties. It goes against the grain to turn beggar; but the thought of my wife and family came over me, and the grief which would visit my fireside if I went to the bad, as I must have done had I given in to those blood-sucking crimps. The steward was inclined to be gruff at first, not having much money himself, and not knowing how far he could trust me not to give myself up to the sharks. At last he lent me half a crown, and then I fisted my box and bedding, amidst the jeers and derision of the whole shoal of sharks, male and female, that had crowded round the ship, and escaped safe to land. I fell in with a cab-driver who had given up sailing because he couldn't stand the Scrapers and Cheapjohns any longer, and he kindly consented to drive me all the way to my own door for the borrowed half-crown.

My good wife tugging hard at my inmost heart had thus dragged me safely through perils of the land far greater than the dangers of the sea; the steward—God bless him for it—supplying the means of escape. But twelve years' scurvy treatment at sea, and shark practice in port, was enough for me; and as in early life I had served an apprenticeship to a gardener, I did as most of the best seamen do when they can—I put out my shore moorings for a full-due, and here I am a horticultural gardener in partnership with my brother.

Though I had thus escaped from the crimps, they had been more successful with others, as was plainly visible when we mustered outside the shipping-master's office on pay-day. Those five days of idle waiting in the slums of east London, far away from home and friends, had evidently done Scrapper & Cheapjohn's work, by reducing many of the crew to poverty, and thus compelling them, to prevent starvation, to ship again at once in another vessel, without asking any inconvenient questions about the grub, housing, or lime-juice they are likely to receive on board. So Scrapper & Cheapjohn think, in their short-sighted parsimony, that they gain by leading their men into the hands of such crimps as Barabbas; forgetting that it is not poverty alone the seaman suffers, but the diseases of the dissolute, which soon unfit him for exposure and exertion, when shipped off without medical care or attention. The captains know well enough that the crimp's flock are so diseased and corrupted, that the first breeze of wind, or hard day's work, knocks them under; but the captains are only the servants of the Scrapers and Cheapjohns; and, besides, must take any men they can get to make up the *number*, whatever be their *quality*. Indeed, they are only too glad to get foreigners and landmen to make up the crew, as shipowners find them so much cheaper than English boys, who, though longing for the sea in large numbers, are taken in very few ships.

The "Mary Jane's" crew had entered port in high spirits, and comparatively good health, like a well-found ship under full sail in a tropical morning; but they looked now like the same ship taken in a white squall, and left half a wreck, so chop-fallen, headachy, and down on their luck. The shipping-master's office was beset by the same crimps who boarded the "Mary Jane," five days before—the runners, the Jew tailors, and the prostitutes, not now

quite so smiling and persuasive, but confident, over-bearing, and repulsive. They had had many of our fellows in tow, drugged and robbed them of health and spirits, ran them deeply into debt, taking their clothes and bedding into quod; and, in one case, having made the man overrun even the money he had to receive, they were going to sell him for his advance note to a ship on the point of sailing—a sort of white slave-trade not uncommon in Christian England—when the poor victim remembered he had money in the Seamen's Savings Bank, which cleared off his debts, and supplied him with sea clothing. When we got inside the office I tried to persuade some of my shipmates to pay off the crimps, and have no more to do with them. They were quite savage with me, and said it was all very well for me to boast that had a home close by to go to; but what could they do, far from their families, without money for five days? and, now they owed the crimps nearly all their wages, and as they couldn't go to sea without clothes, they must go back to the crimps' den to get their traps; though I warned them that, what with the prostitutes and the drink, they wouldn't get away with a penny.

Some of the steady married men, whose wives lived in the country, and some who were looking forward to a respectable marriage some day, had gone to the Sailors' Home, hoping to avoid the crimps; and one man's wife had travelled all the way from Hull to take care of him, though the expense weighed heavily upon her. Another of these hadn't been in the Home many hours before the crimp tailors had secured him, for he wanted some decent shore-going clothes to wear. He didn't know that the tailor was an agent for Barabbas until he got hooked in, and was kept in a continual state of intoxication, and now his money was wholly mortgaged. He had received a letter from his wife in Glasgow entreating him to return home, but he had no money left to pay the fare. Afterwards his poor wife borrowed three pounds which she sent him to run home with; but even this went into the hands of Barabbas and his crew, and he was obliged to re-ship without going home at all.

Another of our married seamen, who went to the Home to wait for paying off, finding nothing to do, went on the third evening to W——'s music-hall, and unfortunately took a drop too much. He was taken in tow by a vile female, who kept him in that state till he had lost most of his money, and was now ashamed to go home to Liverpool to his expectant wife and family. He could only send them two pounds out of the ten months' wages coming to him, though he hadn't left them any half-pay, as Scrapper & Cheapjohn didn't recognise wives, and wouldn't give them any of their husbands' wages monthly.

Another man, whose wife lived only a few miles from London, went with one of the smiling crimps, just to put his box and bedding into Barabbas's keeping, and to borrow some money upon them to take him home. But Barabbas's crew made him drunk, and kept him continually so until the pay-day, when he was only sober enough to receive his wages and hand them over to Barabbas, who shipped the poor fellow off without even seeing his wife and family, or sending them a sixpence. I heard that the poor wife was

nearly starving afterwards, and after a fruitless application to Scraper & Cheapjohn and to Barabbas, she and her children had to go to the workhouse.

And thus it is that scarce a week passes but some poor sailor's wife comes up to London to look for her erring husband. The chaplain to the Sailors' Home asserts that "nine-tenths of the misery suffered by sailors' wives and families might be wholly avoided if their wives could meet them at their ships, and take them straight home. These homes must necessarily be close to the docks and shipping offices. *The chief mischief arises within twenty-four hours of his first putting foot on shore.*" For my part, I don't see what is to prevent each seaman receiving part of his pay when the ship arrives in dock, as the Act requires. Let a policeman attend to prevent crimps and other thieves from entering the ship, and an omnibus or van come alongside and take our baggage and ourselves to the railway station, or to any other place within four or five miles, for one shilling or so a head. We could then go straight home at once, the rest of the wages, with the papers, being forwarded to our homes through the post-office. How many sailors' wives and families would bless the shippowner who took this little trouble on their account! Ah, but what would the crimp interest say?

But don't think the crimps had it all their own way with the "Mary Jane's" crew. Some of our best seamen were as steady as a rock, though they bemoaned the expense and the time of waiting idly in a strange port for their wages. These came up to the pay-table like men, sober as judges, steady as churches, like independent God-fearing Christians. Two of these said they didn't mean to try the scurvy any more except to work their passage to India, to join an old shipmate on one of the railways. Their shipmate had been promoted from a station porter to guard of a goods train, then to guard of the mail, and now he was inspector on the platform, and they intended to try their luck in the same line.

Another man had secured a billet in the fire brigade, for which his name had been down for some time. But poor Jack Hawthorne was going to emigrate in high dudgeon. And this is how it was. Scraper & Cheapjohn wouldn't give a farthing of our wages to our wives all the time that we were absent in the "Mary Jane," yet Jack's wife managed to get on pretty well till she fell ill. When she recovered she strove hard to keep out of the workhouse; but she couldn't get work again, and being in a strange port there was nobody to help her. The poor woman was sore beset with temptations, amongst the low neighbours she had to live with in a court where ten or twelve families dwelt in the same house; so an unmanly villain took advantage of her necessity, and poor Mrs. Hawthorne fell and went to the bad. That's why Jack Hawthorne abused his country so, and rapped out about the hard lives sailors and their families had, and the little sympathy decent seamen and their wives received from their Christian countrymen, and none at all from those who ought to have an eye to their families in the sailors' absence. He vowed he'd emigrate from such a country; and as Hawthorne is a clever, steady, and determined fellow, he kept his word, and I daresay he is prospering well, though nothing can make amends for the loss of his wife, which he owes to the cruelty of Scraper & Cheapjohn.

The old sail-maker, too, was for laying out his moorings. He was sixty years of age, a rare old age for a scurvy-fed and shark-bitten sailor, but he looked tottering enough for eighty. He asked the shipping-master for the pension due to him from the Merchant Shipping Fund, for which a shilling had been deducted from his wages monthly, as he thought, for five-and-forty years. I cannot describe the old man's look of anguish and surprise when the shipping-master got him to understand that he was not entitled to a pension at all, as he had ceased to be a subscriber eight years before. The old man was sure he was a subscriber, for nobody had told him otherwise, or given him any paper about it. He had never looked into his account, but he supposed the shipping-master had deducted the shilling a month as usual. He then pleaded hard to have some of the money returned which Government had taken from him monthly for seven-and-thirty years. It was no easy matter to make it plain to the sail-maker that the fund had been so mismanaged by local committees, that the Government stopped it, though they still paid pensions to those who had the hardihood to persist in subscribing after the local mismanagement had been assigned by the Government as a reason for making payments no longer compulsory. It was heart-breaking to see the old man's face after forty-five years of a sea life, and thirty-seven years' compulsory subscription to a Government fund, when he fully comprehended that his fate was to be handed about as a pauper from parish to parish, until he could find a workhouse to own him, and keep him for the rest of his days.

Amongst those who came to the pay-table for wages was Newman's widow. She hadn't yet heard of her husband's death, and fearing he had fallen into the hands of the crimps, had come to the shipping-office in search of him. There it was she first heard from us how Scrapper & Cheapjohn had deliberately poisoned her husband with mock lime-juice and want of vegetable food. Poor woman, she was left badly off, for though Newman had subscribed for years to two local clubs when he was in the coasting trade, both had failed. A party of us asked Scrapper & Cheapjohn's clerk, who was paying us, whether something couldn't be obtained for the widow from the owners, seeing that her husband had died in their employ.

"Scrapper & Cheapjohn know nothing about seamen's private affairs, much less about their wives," answered the clerk; "and, besides, they are too busy to attend to such matters."

"We'll go into the city, to their office, and see them ourselves about it," we replied.

"Not much use in that," said the clerk; "they won't see you on any account. They have other ships and sailors to look after besides you, and if they had to see their hands personally and listen to every trumpety complaint, they would have no time to attend to trade."

Angered and indignant at the heartless reply, we turned to the shipping-master, and asked for a coroner's inquest to show how Newman had been murdered. He smiled at our simplicity, and explained that unless we brought the body to land for the jury to see, no inquest could be held. But how could we do that? The man died in the middle of the Atlantic, and you

may be sure the captain wasn't likely to embalm the body as evidence against his owners, and maybe against himself as well. And so sailors may rot and die, or be drowned in ill-found but well-insured ships, and nobody inquires how it was done? or who's in fault.

"Where he goes and how he fares,
No one knows and no one cares!"

We used some very strong language, I can tell you, when we vowed we'd send a round-robin to the Board of Trade about it. The clerk laughed outright, as he said, tauntingly, "Your round robin will only be sent over to the Local Board, of which Cheapjohn is an influential member. The board keep some 'whitewashers' at hand for all such cases; and they'll take good care that nothing shall come to light injurious to such a respectable firm as ours. We contribute too much to the Customs, and command too many voices in Parliament not to be easily whitewashed from such a frivolous complaint." He didn't tell us that Scrapper's brother is in the cheap provision trade, and takes small shares in a large number of ships, on condition that he may supply the sea store of grub. This he does at the rate of fourpence per pound for salted pork, and other articles in proportion; whilst lime-juice, which ought to cost four shillings a gallon if good, is supplied at one shilling, thus saving the owner about three shillings per man in a four or five months' voyage.

Scrapper's brother, too, is on the Local Marine Board, and no doubt looks upon an honest inquiry as injurious to his trade. You must know that these local boards are said to be about as independent of the Board of Trade as the workhouse guardians are of the Poor-law Board.* Being a *free* country, such people are freely licensed to cheat and poison sailors for the good of trade.

In a few minutes after this angry altercation the "Mary Jane's" crew separated for ever, parting to the four winds of heaven; but before they did so a small subscription was made on the spot for the poor widow and children of the poisoned seaman.

Since I've taken to the spade, I've heard such balderdash talked on the platform about what England does for her "noble-hearted tars," that I thought a sailor's own plain story of the sort of care that was taken of his own body, mind, and soul by a grateful and sympathizing country, might supply these orators with a change of text, and enlist for his old shipmates a more intelligent and useful sympathy from your readers.

"When mad-brained war spreads death around,

By them you are protected;

But when in peace the nation's found,

These bulwarks are neglected."

* We fear the seaman who narrates these experiences is, as a general rule, too correct in these strictures; but he is in error as to the disposition of the London Board, for by Parliamentary Paper, No. 404, on "Scurvy in Merchant Ships," we learn that the Local Marine Boards in London, Newcastle, and Hull, are in favour of the inspection of provisions, &c., to save the sailor from low class share shipowners; but that several other Local Boards are content to leave him a victim to unprincipled traders.—EDITOR.

WHICH WILL HE MARRY?

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE BROWN BEQUEST."

CHAPTER IV.

ALL young women who dwell in towns ought to be aware that flirting in the country is a much more dangerous amusement than flirting in town. During the remainder of Miss Hathorn's visit to Barnston, she and Mr. Playfair, whether by chance or intentionally, met each other almost every day. They met at dances, at picnics, and in country walks; having thus more opportunity in a week for the pastime in question than they could have had in a town in a year. August must end however. Its last day came. The first of September came, and she was gone. She was so very sorry to go, however, that she spent some time in weeping during the journey south. She had little thought that it would ever have come to this. "How had it happened?" she asked herself. He had been a change to her, she supposed, from town men. He had a genuine ring about him, and they had been much together, and under pleasant and happy circumstances. Had he only been a landed proprietor with two or three thousand a year, so that they might have lived half the year in London, how nice it would have been. Barnston was all very well for a summer visit, but to spend all one's days in it—no, no, this could not be. But it was very perverse in things to be as they were; and then there came more tears. Then it occurred to her that she was a fool for distressing herself in this way. Men were all vain and inconstant, and no doubt he would cease to think of her in six months.

As to poor Mr. Playfair himself his condition of mind after Miss Hathorn's departure must be left to the imagination. Barnston grew to be almost intolerable to him. Its pettiness, its monotony, and its ways generally, grew more and more tiresome and detestable with each day that passed. He read a good deal of philosophy and poetry at this period of his life, and brooded much but inconclusively over the mysteries of human life and of the universe. I am sorry to say that he quite gave up going to church; a step which completed the severance between him and the Barnston public. Some of his enemies even began to talk at this time of a representation to head-quarters against continuing a man of his views as the bank agent. Even Mrs. Spence, who had taken his part in everything, except in the Hathorn flirtation affair, was now at a loss for a line of defence. She assured everybody, however, that Arabella was using her influence with him, and that no doubt she would bring him to see his errors; at least if she failed, no one else need try. So it came to pass that Mr. Patrick held a consultation with himself one afternoon, in course of which he proposed, debated on, and passed two resolutions—first, that life in Barnston was intolerable; second, that, as suicide was against the instincts, if not against the reason, of humanity, he must live elsewhere. He would look out for an opening in the great city of New York, in which he had received his business education.

Once resolved he set energetically about the matter. He had several busi-

ness friends in Nework, to whom he wrote. An opening was not long in being found. A little capital was all that was wanted. He had been economical, and possessed the necessary sum. A journey to Nework and an examination of books settled the matter. The firm of Potter and Hodge, wholesale wine merchants in Nework, was henceforth to be known to the world as Potter, Playfair, and Co., Hodge being paid off by Mr. Playfair's capital. P. trick returned to Barnston for a few days to wind up his bank accounts, in better spirits than he had been in for a long time. He went to church upon the last Sunday, and listened to a discourse by the Rev. Athanasius Rosary with less manifestation of contempt and impatience than usual. On the following Tuesday the generous public of Barnston, willing to forget the past, entertained him to dinner in the Queen's Head hotel, when his health was drunk with much enthusiasm; Mr. Playfair, according to the *Barnston Mail*, returning thanks in a speech "replete with feeling and good taste."

CHAPTER V.

NEWORK is a large town, or rather city. In it you find many kinds of society. There is "good" society; that is, society composed of men whose father or grandfather has made money for it. There is inferior society, but which still considers itself "good," composed of people who have made money for themselves, and whose ambition it is, for the most part, to crawl or wriggle into the society of those whose fathers made it for them. There is also literary society in Nework, divided into many grades. Now, though of a refined turn of mind and of ancient lineage, Mr. Playfair was, by force of circumstances, thrown entirely into the business society of Nework, and he was by no means at the top of that. The men with whom his daily life brought him in contact were almost as narrow and conventional in their ways of thinking and acting as the Barnstonians whom he had so much despised. Their conversation ran upon invoices, charter-parties, and bills of lading. They worshipped money, were envious of each other's houses and furniture, and went twice to church every Sunday to get absolution for the tricks of trade done during the past week, and to be repeated in the week to come—all like decent and respectable folks. This is but a sketch, in which I have not space to trace moral or intellectual growth or decay. It must be sufficient to say that, after much struggle with self and with remorseless fate, Mr. Patrick Playfair at last yielded in the contest. With a silent protest against destiny, he succumbed to bills of lading, invoices, and conventionalism. Fortune, pleased apparently with the surrender, smiled upon him, and gave him a fair allowance of such rewards as the much courted goddess has to bestow. He has now been three years in Nework. His banker is very civil to him, and mammas of his own social status are kind and hospitable. Perhaps he may now be on the way to become what is called "a worldling." Men generally love that for which they feel that they have made a great sacrifice.

Mr. Playfair is still unmarried, and so is Miss Arabella Spence. Barnston is in a truly deplorable condition. The new agent for the Southern Bank is

a married man; Mr. Brown of the Eastern has gone conclusively to the dogs; and while there are more young ladies than ever, there is positively not one young gentleman left in the place. What is a young woman to do, who has no occupation in life but reading novels, and dreary worsted work? To have nothing to do, to see youth and beauty fading away, with nothing but old maidenhood and narrow means for the middle and end of life's journey, is enough, I think, to make a woman take to—anything you like to fancy. Visiting the poor is very praiseworthy, and being very high church, or very low church, may be an outlet for some suppressed forces; but there are others which cannot be adequately carried off by any of these inventions.

It is a gloomy day in the month of November, Miss Arabella is reading aloud to her mamma one of Mr. Bulwer's popular romances; mamma being engaged in the execution of a piece of worsted work of very wonderful design.

"There is no denying it, mamma," observes Bella, laying down her volume with a yawn, "Barnston is used up. Not a soul left in it. It is a perfect tomb."

"I am sure, Bella dear, I do not know what is to be done. I wonder if there is no chance of Aunt Jane asking you to Nework this winter. I'll tell you what I shall do, Bella, I will send your aunt a present of poultry, and a note saying that you are not strong just now, and are advised to try change of air. She may perhaps take the hint."

The experiment was tried, and proved a success. Aunt Jane, however, cautiously limiting her proffered hospitality to "a fortnight or three weeks;" but Arabella wisely resolved that three months would be more like the thing; and as she was a young lady of some resolution, I think it very likely that she will make good her point.

Thus it happened, in the month of December, 185—, that Miss Arabella Spence came to town because she required change of air. Mr. Playfair would doubtless call on her on hearing of her arrival. He was still a bachelor; and, what was more, if Barnston was correctly informed, he was quite a prosperous one. It was three long years since Patrick had passed that bright oasis of his life, August, 184—, the month of Miss Hathorn's visit. Was he still in love with that young lady? and, if so, to what extent? These are questions which I leave readers to determine for themselves, on the premises of their belief in the general constancy of men's affections, and on such knowledge of the character of the individual as I have been able to convey.

Miss Arabella, we know, had entertained an unrequited affection for Mr. Playfair. This is quite true, but though he had never been able to fall in love with Arabella to the extent of wishing to marry her—her manner and style not being to his taste—he had always entertained towards her that feeling of tenderness which men of his constitution of mind are pretty sure to feel towards any woman whom they believe to regard them with partiality. Three years, too, had made a considerable change in Mr. Playfair's sentiments towards Barnstonians in general. Barnston and its inhabitants, instead of being daily irritating realities, had become tender associations; for, how-

ever wearisome the past may have been, we always look sadly back upon it. He had a feeling, not uncommon, that his past life had been silly and unphilosophical. While glad that he had left Barnston, he was of opinion that, while there, he had behaved "like an ass."

On hearing that his old friend Miss Spence had come to town, he lost no time in calling upon her. Whether this step was so promptly taken to make amends for past ill treatment to Miss Arabella as representing Barnston, or from some more personal feeling towards her, I am unable to say. There is such a thing as parting from a woman with indifference and falling in love before you see her again. Who knows what may have happened to Mr. Playfair? He was of rather a sentimental turn, much given to brooding tenderly over old times and old friends. Arabella had a pretty, lively, good-natured face. Who knows how often the mysterious laws of association may have presented it to his mind's eye, until he may have come to regard its ideal presence with feelings of pleasure?

The young lady gave her visitor a most gracious reception. It was a cold day, and she poked the fire into most cheerful blazes for him, as she knew that he liked warmth and light.

"Awful cold, isn't it?" she said. She was still the old Arabella, that was clear. But as he looked into her pretty, good-natured face, it did not seem to him so utterly impossible as it once had done that he should marry a woman who said that a day was "awful cold." He wished, however, that she had only said "awfully cold." They talked, of course, a great deal about Barnstonians, and what they were about; but of course they were about nothing. Nothing ever happened in Barnston. There had been an attempt to get up a ball, but as it seemed that nine-tenths of the company was likely to be feminine, the great idea had to be given up. "And how are you liking Nework, Patrick?" inquired Arabella. Patrick replied that he was liking Nework very well, and that he was getting on nicely in business.

"Ah, yes, you men are well off," replied Miss Spence; "you can go into the world and act for yourselves, while we poor women are helpless."

"Why, you don't know what you escape in having none of the cares of business to bear."

"Ah, but you don't know what it is to have one's daily life—one's present and one's future—a dead, cheerless, blank—without fears or hopes—with no one to care for and no one to care for you."

She was talking genuinely as to an old friend, and something like a tear was traceable in her eye. Though she wanted a little polish, she had plenty of kindly human feeling about her. Doubtless she would make a true and loving wife and mother.

"My mother, you know," she continued, "is getting very old. She can't live for ever. All our old friends are dying out or leaving Barnston, and we shall soon know no one intimately. The cares of active life, I think, I could bear as cheerfully as any one. But to have nothing—actually I may say nothing—to live for! I am talking to you, you know, as to an old friend, Patrick. But I dare say you have had enough of this."

Patrick, indeed, was very much touched; for he had a keen sympathy with

human sorrow. Had she been the most consummate flirt in the world, she could not have managed better.

He had called the day after her arrival in town. He sat for an hour and a half. He was coming to-morrow night to take her to the theatre; for he felt that it would be a shame if he did not do what little he could to give her some amusement.

When Aunt Jane heard all this, she looked very knowingly at her niece, and asked a good many questions about Mr. Patrick Playfair.

CHAPTER VI.

THEY went to the theatre; and next night Arabella was going to a public ball with Aunt Jane. Would Mr. Playfair come? Patrick was not fond of dancing. He had not been to a ball since he came to Nework; nevertheless, to this one he would come, that he might have the pleasure of reviving the memory of old times by dancing with Miss Spence. Aunt Jane being a lady of some taste, her advice on the matter of dress was highly beneficial to Arabella. So much was this the case, that when the young woman was arrayed in her ball-dress, she looked really very handsome. The air of rusticity disappeared, or at least was greatly modified, by the influence of becoming attire, and the consciousness of good appearance. Her face and figure were both of that style which show to advantage in a ball-room. Patrick almost started when he saw her, such wonders had been wrought by the combined efforts of Aunt Jane and a first-rate milliner.

The ball was indeed a gay sight—an ethereal compound of light, music, and beauty. Waltzing would have been like floating through the heavens in a summer's dawn in company of an angel, had it not been for the risk of collision with material forces. Patrick danced a little, and walked about a great deal with Arabella. She was, somehow, a little tremulous and nervous. He felt her arm occasionally to tremble very slightly as her hand touched his. He was not a conceited fellow, but he could not be blind to the position of matters.

He had a habit of analyzing human emotions, and he had come to the conclusion that an infinite variety of conditions is comprehended under the term being "in love." In Arabella's case it meant this: "I know that Patrick Playfair is a man who would treat me kindly if I were to marry him. He has comfortable means, and I like him well enough. I have a heartfelt desire to escape the doom of being a Barnston old maid, and, so far as I can see, Patrick is my only chance. Every hope I have in life seems now to depend on the throw of a die. This excitement and suspense are hard to bear." Mr. Playfair saw all this, but he did not feel elated or heartless because he saw it; nor did he despise Arabella, as a man who thought conventionally and not cynically of human motives would have done. He felt touched and sorrowful, as he contemplated the anatomy of the poor human heart thus bared to his gaze. He was certainly not in love with her. He would not have been sorrowful had he heard that she was going to marry some one else. At least the pang would have been slight and soon over. Between them he

feared that there was little ground in common. She was hopelessly unimaginative. She had no sense of humour. In short, she was utterly commonplace and prosaic. Everything was dead against the wisdom of a life-long alliance. But, on the other hand, she was pretty—in sorrow—appealing to him; and the dictates of Mr. Patrick's understanding being perfectly sound, what is there more likely than that he will act in direct opposition to them? To be appealed to by a pretty woman is a circumstance calculated to upset the strongest bachelor intellect.

The words trembled on his tongue. She felt instinctively that it was so, and her heart was beating so fast and wildly that she hardly knew where she was. She was recalled to reality by the sound of a sweet musical voice, which said, "How do you do, Miss Spence?" and looking up, she beheld Miss Anne Hathorn. It required the mightiest effort of womanly pride which Arabella had ever made in her life to return the greeting with composure. For a second she felt sick, almost to fainting. It passed off, however; but she told Mr. Playfair that, having become slightly unwell, she would like him to go home with her immediately.

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE he went home with Miss Arabella, it was, I think, understood between Patrick and Miss Hathorn that there was a likelihood of his returning, though no words passed between them to this effect. And he did return, though Arabella had contrived to detain him for an hour. On shaking hands with her, he had felt that hers was as cold as lead. She asked him if he meant to return to the ball, and he had replied that he did not think he would. Nevertheless, being but a mortal man, he did go back; for had not the music of her voice, and the glance of her eye, in an instant kindled the old fire into a more intense glow than ever? Very unprincipled, is not it, to be on the eve of asking one woman to marry you, when the glance of an eye is all that is wanted to make you the slave of another?

It was more than three years since they had met. How he wondered if she had had any thought of him during these long years. She was visiting some friends in Nework. She had affected to be surprised at meeting Mr. Playfair; but she was not so in reality, as she knew of his being settled in Nework, though she did not choose to let him know that she knew this.

They talked of three years ago last August. They were each pleased to find that the other had a vivid recollection of the minutest incidents of that pleasant month. It was on Tuesday, the 13th, that the picnic to Holmsdale took place, &c. She soon saw that he was still hers, if she chose to have him. She arrived at this knowledge with infinite satisfaction, as, whatever decision she might come to, it was very nice indeed to think that he had loved her constantly for four years. Had she known that he had been on the eve of asking Miss Arabella Spence to be his wife, how she would have despised him. Query—rightly or wrongly?

Might he call to-morrow? Oh, certainly, if he wished, and could spare so much time from business. Her friend, Miss Hailes, and she were generally

at home till two or three o'clock. She would introduce him to Miss Hailes, whom she thought he would like.

He called next day, and while seeing no reason to doubt the niceness of Miss Hailes, he would, I believe, much rather that that young person should have absented herself during his visit. Miss Hailes herself, in virtue of a feminine intuition, quickly felt this. It was not, however, Anne's pleasure that her friend should go out of the room, as she contrived dexterously to give her to understand. She knew if they were left alone what he would ask, and she was not yet quite ready with an answer. While admitting to herself that she did feel towards him a little of the sentiment of *love*, it did not appear to her that this was of itself quite a sufficient reason for marrying him. She knew that he did not know her real nature, and she wanted to gauge his temper, to understand more thoroughly his vanities and his weaknesses, and to consider more fully his position and circumstances with reference to her own requirements in these respects. Shall we say that she is a very cold-hearted young woman, or only a more than ordinarily sensible one?

"Does Edith 'love' Charles sufficiently to marry him?" Such is the interesting question, on the answer to which many a fashionable and "genial" novelist contrives to spin out a lengthy volume; the reader being kept in delightful suspense by the fine equivoque of Edith's mind, which inclines to this side in one chapter, to that in the next; a straw—such as the utterance of some noble sentiment by Charles—finally determining the balance in his favour. Backed by good engravings of Edith in fashionable attire and tragic attitudes, the public is certain to take a lively interest in the progress of her love. There can be no doubt, however, that Edith would have been more wisely occupied—though the public, I fear, would not have felt the same interest in her—had she given three or four months to a prosaic consideration of Charles's temper as compared with her own—to consideration of his strength of mind—of his worldly position and prospects as compared with her own requirements in these respects; and, lastly, of his and her own relative capability of pure spiritual affection.

Is that sentiment, *par excellence*, called *Love*—which springs up between youths and maidens, often like a mushroom, in a single night—likely to be the root of that pure and spiritual love, from whose existence alone constant contact with another human mind can be a source of pleasure, or even endurable? When this true love comes at all, it is the slow growth of years—of long years of mutual self-control—of gratitude for kind words spoken in season, and for harsh words unspoken, which might with justice have been said—of the memory of the world's sorrow and affliction borne manfully and womanfully, hand-in-hand, together.

Such, at least, were the views of Anne Hathorn—flirt though she was, or had been. "I know quite well what you think," she said one day to Patrick, when he was urging his suit. "You think that I should always be like a sunbeam in your house—always bright and cheerful—never out of humour; that I should be always clever and amusing in my conversation, and able to sympathise with and understand you. Is not this it?"

This was just it. She smiled, but her smile had more in it of melancholy than of mirth. She was thinking that after all it was not her that he had been constant to during these three years, but a mere ideal, created in his brain by her own cleverness. "Ah, and I wonder if you were to find me the reverse, or nearly the reverse of all this, how you would feel towards me. If, instead of being at all times bright and cheerful, you were to find that I was very often morose and melancholy—that my temper was wayward—that in many respects I was vain and worldly—could you love me still, Mr. Playfair, think you?" And she looked at him with a very serious expression, indeed.

"Of course, of course," she continued, "you are ready to promise or say anything just now. Could I only believe what you say, then, I *think*—remember, I only say I *think*—I could be grateful to you, and love you in return."

On another occasion. "You men are fools, by reason of your self-love. How often have I laughed misanthropically to see the cleverest among you running after me for no other reason than because I could flatter you without your seeing the process—while women worth ten of me you have condescended to take no notice of. And I don't know, Mr. Patrick," she continued, turning to him with a smile, which always bewitched him, as she well knew, "I don't know that you are any wiser than your neighbours. When I venture at times to indulge a faint hope that you may turn out to be just a very little better (should we really be so foolish as to marry each other), the gleam of hope is sure very speedily to vanish, and then I blame myself for having been a sanguine fool."

While thus she talked, however, she took good care still to keep weaving her spells around him. She had not said, "No," which of course means that she ultimately said "Yes;" and on the first of March, 185—, Miss Anne Hathorn became Mrs. Patrick Playfair.

I only wish that I had been able to provide a well-principled and prosperous husband for Miss Arabella Spence, so that the curtain might have fallen on universal, instead of only on partial, felicity.

THE DOOM OF THE PRYNNES.

PART I.

I BEING then a child, had once two friends,
My cousins then, my guiding angels since.
We dwelt together in a strange old house,
That, like the fortunes of our family,
Had shrunk and withered to pathetic age;
Until men said we should some day be crushed,
A nest of eagles 'neath a crumbling rock;
And yet there was a certain charm in this,
Like living on some cracked volcano side,
That any day might yawn and let us in,
United in the bridal of one death.

The room we used was once the banquet hall,
With many-coloured windows looking east,
Across a little, quaint, old-fashioned street,
That scarcely suited its locality,
The dark, tumultuous heart of London town.
The walls were oaken, wrought in deep device
Of pomegranates and acorns, once our shield,
While underneath the mantel one had carved,
With mingled vanity and insolence,
"Here dined with Owain Prynne, King James the Small."

Beneath a northern light my father sat,
Conversing with the stars from night till morn,
While I sometimes would stand beside his knee
And gaze at Cassiopeia, till I saw
"The lady in the chair," and said she had
My cousin Agnes' face, and smiled well pleased,
She being lady-moon of my young life.
The foolish fancy of a foolish child,
So said my father, while he bade me look
Along the telescope to find out truth.

Then, through the dark and narrow way I peered,
To see the little star become a sun,
With satellites, and bright mysterious rings,
While finest fragments of the Milky Way
Grew into spheres and systems infinite,
Until I sighed—"God must be very tired,
With such a weight of worlds hung round His neck."

My father frowned rebuke; his brother said,
"The child is still so young, Cadwallader;
When Agnes was that age, I humoured her.
Come hither, Elin, I will show you here
The wonders that lie hidden in the world
Of infusoria."

So through his glass
I looked, and saw a teeming mass of life,
A seething, writhing, crawling, ashy life,
And cried, "I do not like our world at all,
It is so ghastly ugly underneath."

The savants banished me, and, nothing loth,
I fled to where my cousins were at work;
We all did work, we Prynnes, being sad and poor.
Sweet Agnes wove a silver web of song,
And Mark, her cousin and mine, drove on a pen
That like a thirsty bird drank up the ink.

While I—I taught a most majestic cat
That claws were made for sheathing, not to scratch,
Until the bright-eyed mice came boldly forth,
And puss was useless, being civilized.

I made confession of my latest sins,
And Agnes, while she chode, did comfort me.
“The beauty is there, though we see it not,
’Tis only we are tired, my little heart;
We see God darkly, through our coloured glass,
As men for safety do observe the sun.”
And yet her own life was not all so calm,
For as our dying lamp was not renewed,
She sat with folded hands, and plaintive sang
The hymn of one who, though a Protestant,
Was yet a nun:

“O driving wind, O drifting rain,
O force and weakness, joined in pain,
Fit parable for me.
Just so, I know and will the right,
And err, and work my soul’s despite,
In sin and misery.

“O little children in the street,
With patient, holy, pattering feet,
And ever-ready smile;
I pray you, draw my soul to yours,
And hold it when it feebly soars,
Lest Satan me beguile.

“O misty twilight, grey and wan,
That like a ghost steals darkly on,
And halts not, nor relents;
I dare not front your visage pale,
Nor come within your solemn veil,
Until my soul repents:

“Repents of woman’s need and claims,
Of instincts, passions, holiest aims,
And clinging, beating heart;
Although I would not have it so,
The spirits will not rise and go
Because I cry, ‘Depart.’

“What though I kneel like marble saint,
My very soul grows sick and faint
At thought of such repose;
My hands may clasp in stony calm,
But, each on each, the throbbing palm
In burning anguish glows.

"Oh, Jesus, son of Mary, hear,
And in Thy plenitude draw near,
And piteously forgive;
As Thou didst live all sanctified,
As Thou in solitude hast died,
Help me to die, and live."

Agnes had sung, as sings the summer wind
That dies away in shadows; but Mark's voice
Came thunderous, like some Gregorian chant,
With neither harmony nor melody,
But roughened largeness in its monotone:

"I, standing here, fling back my agony
Against the brazen glory of the sky;
Ye brutish clouds, that all insensate lie,
And smile, and smile, in blandest idiocy,
Ye are but low, although ye seem to be
Above our earth so very calm and high,
For depth is height, and heart-deep is my cry,
Man only fathoms human agony."

I shivered, Agnes drew me to her side.
"The child is shaken with our stormy winds."
"'The child,'" Mark cried, "'tis evermore 'the child:'
If I were dying, you would moan, 'the child;'
If I were dead, you still would sigh, 'the child!'"

She bent to kiss me, but between our lips
There fell a crystal tear that parted them,
And held them parted, like magician's spell;
And then I knew, as children know such things,
That not my life, nor love, nor deathless soul,
Could weigh, with her, against a hair of his;
Knew it, and loved her utterly the while.

Mark turned and left us; Agnes watched him go,
Like one who sees a sudden, angry sun
Drop down behind the threatening, smoking hills,
To rise upon the ruins of a world.
Yet still she sang to me.

"Sleep, little sister, sleep; the flowers are nodding weary;
Over the mountain-tops steal shadows, soft and slow;
Dreaming thy happy dreams, my love shall still be near thee,
Into the fairy-land together we will go.

"Sleep, little sister, sleep; the bees have ceased their humming;
Swiftly the forest birds have vanished with the light,
Only the nightingale from out the wood is coming,
Singing her tender song, as though she wooed the night.

"Sleep, little sister, sleep; the stars, God's eyes, are beaming

Lovingly o'er the world, as night more darkly falls;

Shadows that hide from Him are only mortal seeming,

He is awake to hear the feeblest babe that calls.

Sleep, little sister, sleep,

Sleep, sleep."

And then, o'er all the trouble of the day,

A downy veil of tranquil stillness stole,

And with her arm beneath my head I dreamt

It was God's heart on which I rested, safe.

S. A. D. I.

A FAIRY GIFT.

AT twilight, when it was not yet too dusk to distinguish the bluish bloom of the old Scotch firs, behind which the sky was so softly rose-tinted, two women sat and talked at an open window. The elder, seated in a low large chair, the younger, young enough to be her daughter, on a cushion at her feet. They had been talking of the young girl's lover: there was a wonderful radiance in the luminous brown eyes that looked up into the older and sadder ones, and a flush as delicate as the pink on the apple-blossoms outside over the fair face.

"You want to know," said that older woman, "what was the fairy gift which I told you brought me back to care for life when I thought I had done with all care for it, when I wanted only to die; as if, bitter-thoughted, thankless-hearted, I was fit to die! I'm going to tell you, Elsie, what that gift was.

"Years and years ago—you may reckon how many when I've done—I came home to my cheap London lodging at dusk one bitter winter evening. I was as miserable, body and mind, as I could be; I was cold at heart, cold in limb; I was wet through, and I was weary; I was utterly discouraged and discomforted. I had been out all day, and my sitting-room welcomed my return with a fireless grate, with a raw, yellow, foggy atmosphere, to be seen and smelt and felt. I was home—what mocking misuse of the sweet word such employment of it seemed—earlier than the servant-of-all-work had expected me. I was too profoundly miserable to care for these things. I lighted a candle and went into my bedroom, and there, when I had changed my dress, which I did, not that I minded being wet and cold, but that, country-born and country-bred, I loathed the mud of the London streets. I sat down, and, my head in my hands, began to think, to brood.

"I was all but penniless, and that evening had received the last of a long list of discouragements. The manuscript of my last novel had been returned to me by the seventh publisher to whom I had offered it, and sundry manuscripts of shorter stories I had found refused by the editors to whom they had been offered. I didn't wonder. I had written of shadows with a pen dipped in gloom. Even the inspiration of the first bitterness of grief and wrong—which

had made a book I had written for revenge an even greater success than one inspired by hope and steeped in happiness had been—had left me now. I didn't wonder at my failures. I rose, and heaped up my worthless papers in the empty bedroom grate, and watched them burn. I didn't wonder none wanted them. But what was I to do? almost penniless, quite friendless, alone in London. My clothes were not good enough, I thought, to allow me to apply for any sort of situation. Who would take a woman, either, for whom nobody would speak? I looked at my own face in the glass—a hard, sullen, desperate-eyed face—and thought, 'I would not try you or trust you. Above all, I would not have you trusted with little children.'

"To beg, or to die slowly by starvation, I should be ashamed.

"I had struggled on for the means of life long after I had thought I hadn't cared to succeed, and now they failed me. There seemed nothing left for it but to die—why not die quickly?

"It appeared to me strange that I had so long cared to feed my body when my soul was starved and my heart dead. I was five-and-thirty; it appeared to me that I had already been ten years dead, and that to die now physically, what people call dying, might really be a change to life. I had had youth, love, success, all in one flush, and now all were gone. What was there left me? I groped about in the empty chambers of my mind and heart, where was no light, and found nothing.

"Don't look at me so pitifully, Elsie; it is all over now, thank God. It wasn't a story fit for you to hear when you were younger, my child.

"Well, as I sat there in my dismal room that night, I thought over the past. I had known a very happy, a much loved, and a luxuriously cared-for girlhood; and when at twenty I lost my father and mother within a few days, had very soon after to leave the grand old mansion where I had been born, and learnt that I had nothing in the world I could call my own—the blow of all this loss and change was softened to me.

"I had a lover. I was engaged. I didn't love or live by halves, and I belonged to him with every hope and thought I had. We were to have been married soon; but my utter loss of fortune made a difference in our plans, and not many months after I was left an orphan I had to part from him. He was ambitious, I knew; he had told me of splendid prospects opening before him if I would send him away for three years, to India, and he had told me to decide whether he should or should not go. I knew he was ambitious, and I was proud for him: since I could not help him on as I had hoped to do, I was, at least, anxious not to clog and hamper him. I told him to go.

"He made me choose where I would spend the years of his absence, and I—my head already full of schemes and dreams of fame and fortune I would win in my way while he worked on his—chose a place I had often gone to as a child, and of which my old nurse was mistress—the Old Farm it was called.

"It was an ancient manor house now turned farm, buried deep in the country; a lovely place at this time of the year, at this time of day—spring twilight; a bewitching place, smothered up in blossomy orchards, just winking with gleamy windows, and asserting itself with fantastic chimneys.

"Here Ralph (yes, Elsie, your father's name) made me a home. He bought

in my piano, my favourite books and ornaments, a few pictures, a few pet pieces of furniture, spending far more than he could afford at the sale that took place at my former home; and the two rooms furnished for me at the Old Farm—a large, oak-panelled, crimson-hung parlour, with one mullioned window looking to the west, from which I saw the sunsets between the orchard-trees, and one to the south, looking along a broad, flagged terrace-walk to a great walnut-tree that overhung the entrance-gate—this parlour, and the bedroom above it, which had something of the colouring of the blossoming apple-trees upon whose tops I looked down when I first went to the Old Farm, were the prettiest rooms I have ever seen.

“The first day I spent there was Ralph’s last day in England. It was a happy day; he was so pleased at my pleasure. How the thrushes sang in the twilight, how the sunset rose lingered on the blossoms; I can recall it all, even, it seems to me, the twist of each bough of the old walnut, black against the clear amber of the sky.

“When the time of parting came it was I who forced myself, for his sake, to be calm. He loved me then. There was no mistaking the strong passion of his clasp as he strained me to him. If I had then said in womanly weakness, clinging to his neck, ‘Don’t go, Ralph, I can’t bear it,’ he would have stayed. Because I knew this, knew my power; because I wanted to be more than a mere woman, it was I who bade him go.

“How far I was guided in this by the deep instinctive conviction that *he* would not be satisfied and happy in the narrow struggling life we must have led if we had then begun life together, God only knows. I know that a thousand times in the last hour such words as I should have despised myself for speaking rose to my lips and were not spoken. It seems now as if it would have been better had they been spoken, but they were not. The discipline of suffering was appointed us, and I let him go.

“I said just now he loved me then. He always loved me, Elsie. I know that now; but when that dismal winter night I sat alone in my wretched lodging, and thought over the past, I did not know it. My thoughts were bitter then, and my blood was black.

“It was five years instead of three before Ralph came home. Those were my years of work. All my life was alive, and alert, and alight. I wrote two novels in those five years, and many stories, and with everything I had wonderful success. I had a friend in London then—now long, long dead—who was my medium of communication with the world. He kept the thorns and the gall for his own portion, and gave me for my portion the honey and the cream of appreciation and praises, and the solid and golden results of success. How much I owed to that kind, patient, and wise friend I had to learn slowly and painfully later when I had lost him.

“Those five years were not leaden-weighted. The first few months of absence and the last were the only ones that were very heavy and hard to bear.

“Ralph was one of those men who find letter-writing always irksome; but about the few last letters I had from him, I could not help feeling a chill air of restraint. Had I displeased him? Perhaps he did not like the notion of a writing-woman for a wife—it was only lately I had told him my secret.

Well, if so, I need never write another line, and what harm was done? My name and myself were both unknown. I had never once, in those five years, gone more than five miles from my nest.

"It was five years and five days from the time when we had parted when I had a brief, strange note—a note that somehow sounded to me more like farewell than greeting—to tell me to expect to see him that very evening.

"He was noble, Elfie; but I could not see or feel how noble in my first misery.

"Long before I could reasonably expect him I was waiting at the orchard gate. I had been waiting there through the afternoon, though I knew he could not come till evening.

"The exquisite evening light was gold and emerald upon the grass, rose, ruby, and opal upon the blossom-covered trees; it coloured their lichened trunks with namelessly exquisite tints, it bloomed the purple of the low distant hills, it filled the whole atmosphere with an enchanted haze. The bank beside me was so thickly starred with primroses you could hardly see their leaves; its hedge was white with hawthorn blossom. The grass at my feet was flower-studded, daisied, dimmed with speedwell-blue, here and there cowslip-spotted.

"It was here I waited, and it was here that presently autumn fell on me suddenly, to be swiftly succeeded by winter frost, black and bitter. It was here that I seemed to die out of the world that held beauty, and faith, and love. It was here, between the orchard aisles, while white and rose-tinted snow fell on us, as a bird moved in the branches, or the evening wind stirred them, that I lost hope, and faith, and love.

"When he had come in at the orchard gate I had had no thought but to fly into his arms; but his face forbade me. He led me by the hand deep into a sheltered part of the orchard and told me—not the truth, oh! not the truth, as I know now, but what I then accepted as truth. He could only have excused himself at the expense of another woman, who was then his wife. This he would not do, so he told me bare facts, harshly and bitterly, because of his own extreme bitterness and misery. There was repressed passion of strong love in every tone and look as I can recall them now; then I saw nothing of that. I was stunned. My idol had fallen and crushed me. After he had said the word wife; after I had learnt that he spoke of another woman as his wife, I hardly heard or understood anything. I leant back against a tree, just conscious that he stood opposite with folded arms and watched me. I went mad for a few moments I fancy. I raved at him, and told him he was gloating over my misery; then I threw myself into his arms, and told him he was trying my temper, which he had sometimes told me was not too good, that he was cruelly jesting with me; but when he put me out of his arms without one caress, saying, 'This is no fit place for you,' my heart stopped beating; I lost him and the world, and fell upon my face down among the flowery grass and the fallen blossoms.

"He lifted me in his arms, and I was conscious of them, for I remember that I clasped his neck and shrieked, and said he should not go.

"He took me to the house, and gave me to my old nurse, and then he went

his way—to his fate—a far worse fate than mine; but of this I knew nothing on the day I sat brooding over the past, alone in my London lodging. Then I had spent no pity on him. I had only thought of him with bitterness and anger for the wrong done me.

"I had left the Old Farm as soon as I was well of an illness that came upon me, because I hated it then; I hated its associations, its quiet, its beauty. 'If God sendeth quietness, who can make trouble?' Peace might have come to me there, but I would not have the quietness, the peace, that might have come to me there from God.

"I went to London because I wanted to be lost out of the world where any one knew me. I wanted to escape from quietness and from beauty, from pity and such love as remained to me; and I had lived ten years of a most miserable life in London when that winter night found me desperate.

"Ralph had tried to do something for me, but I had rejected any offer of assistance from him, reviling him for offering it.

"'God has forgotten me,' I said, that night, 'or he would have given me at least a grave.'

"I had hardly spoken those words when some one knocked at my bedroom door. I opened it, and found the servant-girl there. She told me she had said I wasn't in, but thought she'd just run up to see. A carriage at the door was waiting to take me to some one who was dying, or something. I simply answered that there was some mistake; that it was not I who was wanted, and shut my door again. A few moments after she burst in, caught up my shawl and bonnet, and insisted that I should go. It was me they wanted, she said, Miss Verner, and if I did not go at once I'd be too late. Partly because I did not care to contend, partly because some suspicion of the truth, part of the truth, woke in me, I went downstairs, and got into the carriage at the door, asking no questions.

"The footman shut the door upon me, and we drove off quickly. A long drive, ending before the door of a handsome house in a fashionable part of London. A lady met me in the hall—Ralph's married sister, Mrs. Vybart. 'Miss Verner?' she questioned, incredulously, with a quick glance, scanning me from head to foot.

"'Yes, I am Ann Verner,' I answered. 'Who sent for me?' I asked.

"'My brother; he is dying,' she replied. 'He has asked for you incessantly. Can you see him at once?'

"I bowed my head; I could not speak. Dying!—Ralph dying! If so, where was his wife? Her I could not meet.

"I followed Mrs. Vybart upstairs, but when she was going to open the door I asked, 'Is his wife there?'

"'She *here*!' was the wondering answer. 'You don't know anything, then? Oh no, *she* is not *here*.'

"Then I followed her through a large dressing-room, to a bedroom, to a bed. She signed to the nurse to leave the room, and she, too, went away.

"One look into your father's face was enough, Elsie, to soften my heart and waken it. I clasped the dying man's hand in mine, and knelt by him; for a long time no word was spoken. We were not quite alone; there was

a lovely child lying outside the coverlet, sleeping the softly profound sleep of childhood, with her fair head resting on her father's pillow.

" 'She wouldn't leave me,' he said, when he saw my eyes rest on her wonderingly. 'She cried so bitterly when they tried to take her away that they were forced to leave her. Thank God you are come. Thank God you would come,' he added.

" 'We hungrily devoured each other's faces. Oh, Elfie, I trust in God you may never know such moments. And as I read his face, his changed face, his dying face, tears bathed mine, and it was very long since I had shed tears.

" 'I have felt,' he said, 'as if I could not ask God's forgiveness till I have heard you say, "I forgive you, Ralph." Can you forgive me?'

" 'I can; I do,' I said, and I pressed my face down upon his hand, and bathed it with my tears, and pressed my lips upon it.

" 'To hear you say those words I have craved with my last death-longing. God reward you for them.'

" 'God pity me and pardon me rather,' I answered, 'that I did not say them to my own heart long ago. Oh, Ralph, you have suffered!'

" 'Thank God I have,' he answered.

" 'After a pause he asked, 'Are you still there, Ann?'

" 'Here, quite close.'

" 'And the child?' His weak right hand—I held the left—was wandering about. I guided it to rest upon the soft brown head.

" 'Ann, will you take my child? To keep her? She is the one precious thing I have in the world; will you take care of her for me, Ann?'

" 'I promised.

" 'Take her now,' he urged.

" 'I went round to where I could reach her. I stooped over her, and took her in my arms, and as I held her against my breast a whole long winter within me thawed, my heart was softly and sweetly flooded, as by spring rains.

" 'She will love you,' he said. 'I've taught her to love you. I am glad to give you the best thing I have in the world, Ann, the love of a child.'

" 'I pray God to help me to grow less unfit to be keeper of such a treasure,' I answered, brokenly.

" 'He will help you. The child herself will help you.'

" 'Before long, Elfie, you woke and smiled in my face, you let me hold you to kiss papa, good-night, then you let me take you away and lay you in your own little bed in the dressing-room.

" 'After that I went back to your father, and watched the night through at his bedside. He spoke to me at intervals, telling me something of the history of his life, but it was from his sister I heard the pitiful truth of it. I cannot tell it to you, Elfie; the woman who was the cause of so much suffering was your mother, and has long been dead. He forgave her fully and freely.

" 'He died at dawn, but I felt we had regained each other; it was less like death than marriage. It was the resurrection day of my heart and soul.

" 'How you, his child, my fairy gift, changed everything for me! Woke me to a life full of hope, and interest, and sweetness. As if I had been in the law's eye his widow, everything he had was left to me. A new life in a

new home began here for me with my child. You will know one day, I trust, Elsie, the deep and exquisite delight of a child's love. The feelings that are awakened by the absolutely confiding clinging of soft and helpless fingers, by the clasping of soft arms around your neck, the pressing of soft cheek against your cheek, of full sweet lips against your lips. Night after night, for many, many nights, my happiness woke me; how sweet it was to find it was no dream, to press my child in my arms, and fall asleep again, praising God."

"It would break my heart to know all this if you hadn't promised never to leave us."

"I don't think any mother's firstborn child can be the precious and *saving* gift you were to me, Elsie. It was God's infinitely loving pity for me which moved that dear dying hand to give you to me."

EMILY JOLLY.



HERR JOACHIM.

THE English public are now fully alive to the merits of a stringed quartett. The three varieties of the same instrument—violin, viola, and violoncello (all possessing common properties of sound, but each with its own peculiar *timbre*, or individual quality)—embrace an almost unlimited compass and an equally wide sphere of musical expression.

No wonder that Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn, have cast some of their choicest inspirations in the quartett mould; still less wonder that all who love, or who are learning to love, good music should find in quartett concerts the most fitting opportunities for that quiet analysis and subtle contemplation so congenial to the cultivated musician. But how seldom is he critically satisfied.

Quartett-playing is full of difficulties. We have heard four good players play as badly together as they played well apart. You may have four good oars in a boat and a very bad pace and style as the result; *e.g.*, if *bow* sits where *stroke* ought to sit, and the wrong man steers, or if they are not in the habit of pulling together. In rowing, quartett-playing, and everything else, the worst blunder you can possibly make is to put the *right* man in the *wrong* place. Some of the best quartett-playing we ever heard was that executed fifteen or sixteen years ago by MM. Sainton, Hill, Cooper, and Piatti—not because they were all the finest players (although of course Signor Piatti and the late Mr. Hill were quite incomparable)—but because they had "pulled together" for years, and understood perfectly their relative positions. And some of the worst quartetts ever played by great artists were those led shortly afterwards by the late lamented Ernst, in some respects, perhaps, the greatest violinist of the age.

The present cast of the Monday Popular Concerts has probably never been equalled. JOACHIM—*facile princeps*, as first violin; RIES—masterly and perfectly unobtrusive, as second violin; BLAGROVE—too coarse for first violin and too fine for a second—has found his peculiar sphere, and is a kind of Hill

redoubtable, on "the viola ; and, lastly, PIATTI—the only violoncello the public seem likely to listen to as long as he lives ; a violoncello apparently without rosin or catgut or wood. Truly, a kind of disembodied violoncello. If it is true, as Mr. Ruskin affirms, that Turner painted the "souls of pictures," it is no less certain that Piatti plays on the "soul" of a violoncello.

On Monday, the 14th of January, St. James's Hall may be said to have risen—as one man and woman—as Herr Joachim sat down. He was certainly never in finer condition and never played more superbly. These are indeed the golden moments of his prime. Not much over thirty, he has reached with regular and gigantic strides the noble promise of his youth. It seems but yesterday that he stood before us in Exeter Hall, a modest unassuming lad in jacket and trousers, holding his violin well up with the grip of a master, his head with its locks of pale-coloured hair leaning lovingly upon it with a look of quiet and utter absorption which would have been almost weird had it been less calm and happy.

It seems but yesterday that the incredulous artists crowded round the composed and thoughtful boy who came forward to play Bach's fugues on four strings ; and but yesterday that the enthusiastic Mendelssohn clasped him in his arms at the close of his marvellous performance ! Precious memories that only seem so fresh because they have become so dear. The beloved master has been in his grave for twenty years, and the boy violinist now stands before the world in the full maturity of manly vigour, covered with that mantle of high resolve and lofty purity in art which fell from the master's shoulders.

As one who feels that a precious diamond has been committed to him to cut and polish with innumerable facets, so, slowly and laboriously, has Herr Joachim cut and polished his genius until at last it glows and glitters before the world with a singular splendour. Once only was the process interrupted. After winning the highest fame as a young player, he appears to have been seized with the desire of creating music of his own. What evil genius is it that fills a man with a longing to achieve what is denied him ? And who has not at some time or other been possessed by it ? "Neque semper arcum tendit Apollo" became for a time the motto of Herr Joachim, and we believe that for years he refused to play the violin, and devoted himself to musical composition.

Happily it is found impossible "to expel nature with a fork," and Herr Joachim was at last induced to abandon the seclusion of the study for that stage where alone he is destined to reign supreme.

Herr Joachim is distinguished from other eminent violinists by the quantity, as well as by the quality, of his gifts. Ernst may have had that strange romantic fire which is perhaps never found to the same extent in a perfectly balanced mind ; Paganini may have possessed a kind of madness and, we must say the word, trickery, which at once infected and bewildered his audience ; Sivori may possess the sweetness long drawn out, which wraps the soul in languor and delight ; Wieniawski may haunt us like the red light of Mephistopheles in *Faust*, with his wild snatches of capricious and demon-like music—but no one possesses so many qualities combined, and combined in such harmony and right balance, as Herr Joachim.

His intonation strikes as it were the key-note of his genius. The great

pianoforte-makers tell us that there is but one true quality of tone for voices and all instruments—dependent on the character of certain vibrations; that all tone satisfies us, in proportion as it approaches certain ascertained forms of vibration, which may be made actually visible by sand strewn upon a vibratory surface—the sand arranging itself in certain waves, according to the sound vibrating. Broadwood and Erard maintain that their finest instruments approach the true tone; they say that Joachim, Piatti, and some others, possess it. Whether the scientific theory be true or not, one thing is certain, that the great players have an intonation which, whilst it may escape descriptive analysis, places a deep chasm between them and ordinary players.

Let any one go to St. James's Hall and listen to Joachim, and then to Ries, or any other good player, and he will hear the difference. It is a kind of biting quality, which seizes the ear and keeps it—the note never falls still-born in space. It is neither too woolly nor too wiry; but, from the lowest *piano* to the highest *forte*, it travels like the voice of a charmed speaker, and subdues the heart.

We are sensible that other players are instinctively aiming at this quality, and we do not say so much that they never find it as that Joachim never loses it. The consequence is that we listen to others sometimes, but to him always. In one so free from all artifice it seems captious—it may be presumptuous—to hint at a mannerism, but Herr Joachim's practice of sliding the touch where we should expect him to impinge, and impinging where we should expect him to slide, conveys sometimes to the violinist a slight sense of affectation. But even here we pause to consider whether it may not be after all a refinement of beauty.

Herr Joachim is not only great in his manner of doing, but great in his selection of what to do. It may be true that an artist is to be judged by his manner of performance, and that we have no right to detract from him as an artist on the score of unworthy subject-matter. It may be perfectly true that Mr. Swinburne is an exquisite artist, and entitled to our admiration as such, although he will persist in "darkening sanctities with song," and outraging the healthy instincts of ordinary human beings. By all means let art be judged on its own merits. A good man, as such, may be of little use to art; yet he who is as noble in what he selects to do as he is true in the manner of his doing, will always carry the suffrages of mankind against the man who ignores the application of ethics to art.

In music, as in every other art, "there is a higher and a lower." It is the glory of Herr Joachim that his powers have always been devoted to that school of music which reflects the highest and widest sympathies of our nature. In the great classical realm of the German school he walks as a prince in his own dominions. He will turn aside for no man. He speaks familiarly with the great departed ones, and the voice of the dead is indeed a living voice to him. When he stands up to play a Beethoven concerto, there is about him something of the majestic dignity of the great "Tonkünstler" himself. As we listen, and mark the royal possession he takes of the subject with the sceptre of his bow, we say, Thus and thus might Beethoven have played. He balances the orchestra, holds it in check with his softest *piano*, and stands, amid its loudest thunder, "moulded in colossal calm!"

Simple in his grandeur, and grand in his simplicity, Herr Joachim remains for us the highest known type of the executive artist. His intent ear catches every syllable of the inspired oracle—his heart appropriates the truth, and he comes forward to give to the world, with a prodigious power and minuteness, “the open secret” that has been committed to his care. H. R. HAWES.



AMPOLA.

TWENTY-FIVE shots!
 And, out of all the spots
 Where a man could stand and shoot,
 You would have said, “Not *there*.”
 Anywhere else it might be done,
 But not *there*!
 If we could plant a gun
 There, at the battery’s foot,
 There, at the enemy’s breast,
 Of course the fort were won;
 But that’s a grim jest,
 The old tale of a rest
 For a lever to lift the sun—
 A thing not to be done.
 Under that rushing rain of flame,
 To stand still, and aim—?
 Fie! send them not!
 There is no man alive
 Could fire a single shot,
 But Italy found a pair
 To stand JUST *THERE*,
 And fire twenty-five.
 See, the gun’s in its place!
 Through rags of smoke, in the ring of your glass
 You may see a busy face
 Or a quiet figure pass,
 Hard at work, and so near
 You almost fancy you hear.
 One loads, one fires—that’s all!
 (All but the hope and the fear).
 Now they all look up and smile:
 If they had a minute to spare,
 They would stop and shake hands *there*.
 Italy, give them a cheer,
 And get ready to charge, for while
 You look, *there’s* a breach in the wall.
 The gap grows large—
 Not wide enough yet for a charge,
 But nearly; they work with a will!
 One, he is but a boy,
 Has such a look of joy;

The other, a year or two older,
 A little grave and still,
 But not a whit colder ;
 Like a man who knows
 What he leaves, and where he goes,
 With ready heart.
 Why not ?
 He has done his part—
 He was on Marsala's shore.
 If he must leave the land he frees,
 Love goes with him under the sod,
 He gives a gallant soul to God,
 And Garibaldi sees.
 He wants no more.
 That's the tenth shot !

The blast
 Of the shells rushing past
 Is shaking their hair—
 On they work, and God takes care—
 Death not *in*, it *is* the air !
 Twenty! the wall gives way—
 The two look back to their ranks,
 And nod and say,
 "Excuse us for making you wait so long !
 You are getting ready? Thanks!
 In a minute you may come."
 They are quite at home :
 Not a fold in the brow,
 They are getting used to it now.
 We are afraid no more !
 Twenty-four.
 Twenty-five! Is anything wrong ?
 Take the glass and look !
What do you say that you see?
Nothing——? Your hand shook.
 Pass it to me !
 Twenty-five—ere I fix,
 It will be twenty-six.
 Now! There's the gun.
 But the place is void.
What lies on the plain?
 Do not look again.
 Dead, shattered, destroyed !
 With their work done.
 All, but the name, lost ;
 All dead, but the deed ;
 So, and at such cost,
 Ampola was freed.

M. B. SMEDLEY.

Note.—Two of Garibaldi's volunteers performed the exploit narrated in these lines.

SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

XI.

THE large, rare, old-fashioned house which Miss Russett had rechristened the *Acacias*, is not unworthy of a few sentences of description. The garden is quite a sea of greenery, in the middle of which the house stands like an island. A big clump of tall elms shades one side of the front; and on the other side an enormous chestnut-tree has been allowed to grow so near, and press so vehemently upon the building, that, when the wind is high, the great strong boughs grate against the walls and beat upon the roof with groaning, rattling noises that have helped to give a weird repute to some of the rooms upon that side of the mansion.

The outside of the house is of red brick; all the windows being bordered with stone-work, carved in a very old-fashioned way into scrolls of leafage and grinning monster heads. Strictly speaking, the windows are casements, one or two of them with diamond-shaped panes in frames of lead; all of them are roomy casements, both within and without, and in the lower tiers they have borders of stained glass.

A few steps, from the gravel walk upward, lead to a sulky-looking portico, the door of which, being opened, lands you in the entrance-hall. This is as high as the roof of the house, and is lighted by the great central front window. The floor is of stone, laid down in quaint antique patterns, and the broad staircase of polished oak, without carpet, is in front of you. Up and up it winds until it makes a pause at a broad landing-place, where there is room for a duel to be very comfortably fought between *Lovelace* and *Grandison*, if the appointment can be made. From this table-land run off highways of corridors lighted by windows from the back of the house, and branching out into downright mazes; from room to room, recess to recess, upstairs, downstairs, through my lady's chamber, my lord's chamber, to the offices, to the garden, to the attics, to the lofts, to *Bluebeard* cupboards, to *Skeleton Corner*. Such a place for hide-and-seek, in fact, as you will not find the like of in any house erected within the last two hundred years.

Built into the wall, at the top of the stairs, is an old organ which shuts up like a handsome old cupboard. When the locked doors of dark carved oak are slid back the yellow, furrowed key-board is disclosed, and you know the grand old monster for what he is. There he hides, all the long summer days and long winter nights, nursing his beautiful thunder, except when the touch comes that sends it rolling down to the farthest cranny of this wilderness of a house.

As for the rooms, they are all very lofty and full of grotesque antique ornament. The mantelpieces are of oak, the top slabs being held up by mermaids, nymphs, and fauns; the fauns flourishing bunches of grapes and grinning idyllic joy, all down the sides of the capacious fire-places. These are fitted up with old-world dog-irons, for the burning of huge logs of wood:

in some of the smaller rooms, only, a modern coal-stove being set inside the irons.

A house of this kind was certain to have a haunted quarter. In fact, all the rooms that lay next the portions of roof and wall against and over which the innocent chestnut-tree shook in the sweet wind his leafy rattle, were haunted. It was just here that the ins and outs of the corridors and the relations of the rooms to each other were the most bewildering. Any one might play at hide-and-seek for ever among these apartments and galleries. Just as one of the partners in the game fancied he had got the other fast in a cupboard, the latter might have slipped out by a back way and be freshening himself among the box-walks in the shrubbery. Part of this neighbourhood had got the ill name of Skeleton Corner. But a walnut-tree as well as the chestnut-tree had something to do with this. For certain rats, who had also established a granary in the roof, had been in the habit of gathering the walnuts from the boughs, carrying them through a hole they had made in the wall, and storing them up in a huge cupboard. There at unseasonable hours for human beings these well-provided animals kept high jinks and rattled the walnut-shells as they lay in a heap. The servants took the noise so produced to be caused by a skeleton cricking his spine, and generally shaking his bones about in the dark.

Once a month Miss Russett and some of the older girls made up a Dorcas party, to which certain ladies of the neighbourhood were in the habit of coming. At these parties Cherry had been found useful, and being the nice clever maiden she was, full of free, fresh life, such as delighted Miss Russett, she soon made good for herself a footing of considerable intimacy at the Acacias—at which she was accustomed to say (and with much truth) she was finishing her education. It so happened that these Dorcas meetings had been rather numerously attended of late, and, with her usual kindness, Miss Russett had invited the unamiable Miss Luckin to come and help the servants—not because she expected the girl would be of much use, but because she thought she would learn something. If anybody is surprised to hear that such a girl as Amelia Luckin has been described to be should be invited, on any terms or for any purpose, to the Acacias, I can only say he has never known Miss Russett. That lady was a strong churchwoman—naturally enough, since her father had been a clergyman, and she had once sat next to a bishop at dinner, who had taken wine with her, and observed, with reference to the attacks of Dissent (Schism, he called it) upon “the Church,” that “her foundations were upon the holy hills.” This she often repeated. “My dear child,” she would say to Cherry, “religious division is a grievous thing in a family; but I am glad you do not go to Zohrab Chapel with your poor dear mother. It is so *much* better to belong to the Church—her foundations are upon the holy hills, my dear!” This profoundly impressed Cherry. But I was about to say that Woods, too, was not quite a stranger at the Acacias. An accidental word in the street was enough for this good gregarious lady to found a friendship upon; and the fact is, Woods used to look in and borrow great, grave, learned books out of the deceased clergyman’s library. “You know, my love,” she said to Tomboy, “we’re both in the

teaching way; and I love the man, though I abbawr his schism." One day Cherry and Amelia had been despatched into the library to dust and arrange the books, and Woods happening to look in at the time to borrow one, Miss Russett led him upstairs to get it. The first thing they saw through the open door approaching the room was Cherry, or rather Cherry's long hair. She was seated on the low library-ladder, with her feet on one of the steps. Her head rested in her hands; her elbows were on her knees; and her hair falling down in front concealed her face. At the sound of the footsteps she looked up, and, flinging back her hair with a toss, disclosed a countenance which no one could ever look at with indifference, and which was now full of tenderness and thought—doubtless because she had been reading something that touched her. Amelia turned violently red as she noticed that Woods, with a grave smile on his face, made a half pause before entering the room.

"Come along, White!" said she, angrily, "you're not wanted to sit staring there at the gentleman!"

That night the Dorcas party stayed rather later than usual, and two or three of the younger ladies remained to sleep, as Cherry and Amelia often did, and did now. It was part of the moral discipline at the Acacias that the young ladies should take it in turn to sleep in the little blue bedroom in Skeleton Corner, to air it, or to exorcise the ghost or the skeleton, so that there was no bad omen attaching to the place in the minds of anybody but a servant or two who had been heard to maintain that the young ladies would sleep in that room "once too often."

On the walls of this little bedroom were some drawings and water-colour sketches by young ladies in Miss Russett's establishment. When Tomboy went up to bed, she spent a few minutes in studying these pictures. There was a group of flowers, foxgloves, lilies, hyacinths, standard roses, and I know not what—a group or combination as much belonging to Arcadia as the nose-gay in "Lycidas." Another sketch was of the caves of Staffa—and at this Cherry, who had never beheld the sea, had a very prolonged look. Another piece was a mere rack of moonlit cloud seen over the top of a forest. After looking at these sketches for a short time, and trying to make the pictures over again in her mind, she just glanced out of the window into the garden, thought it would rain soon, and then turned herself to thoughts of sleep. With the ease of sound health and an undispersed consciousness, she glided into sound sleep within five minutes of having laid her head upon the pillow. But we must not think of her asleep there, until we have frankly spoken of a little secret she told, when the rest of the story came out—which was a long time afterwards. As soon as she had dressed herself in her night-gown, she tried to kneel down by the side of the bed, and say her prayers as usual; but a sudden twitch of fear came over her as she got her knees upon the floor, and, thinking of the reputation of the place, even while she called herself names for her folly, she darted up and flung herself hastily into bed, drawing the sheets close over her face; she then began to repeat her evening prayer as she lay, and with some few pauses got through to the end. In flinging herself into bed she had blown or swailed out the light, and the room was, she knew, in

darkness, except for what moonlight came in at the window. Now, never before, not even in the coldest winter nights, had Cherry said her evening prayer in bed; she could not rest, and at last peeped out from below the bedclothes. Through the side of the window-blind she caught sight of the moon. It appeared to her as if it looked reproachfully in upon her. With a sudden throb of the heart she flung herself out of bed, knelt down, and said every word of her prayer over again like a good girl. When she had got into bed again, she was asleep in a few moments. The silence in the house was perfect. She quickly glided into a dream.

First, she dreamed she was wandering by night in a garden of wonderful flowers. It was bright, soft moonlight, but there was no moon visible in all the sky. In her dream she noticed this at once, and felt a passionate anxiety to know where the moon was—it was awful to have her light, so clear and pearly-white, without any possibility of seeing her. But the flowers in this wonder-garden well nigh slew her with their beauty. They were more like young trees in a plantation than common flowers of the parterre. There were lilies higher than her head, and foxgloves as tall as palms, so that she could look up into the bells. A moth as large as a bat flitted past her, and she thought how beautiful the garden would look by daylight, with gorgeous butterflies, larger than this moth, hovering among the flowers.

But nothing seemed to stifle her desire to know where the moon was. It became an anguish, and she nearly awoke. As she fell again into sounder sleep her dream changed. She was now in a small boat upon the water—not in the open uncovered sea, but in a cliff corridor of the ocean, the pillars of which were high rocks, between which the water flowed deeply green. Again, it was all clear moonlight, but there was no moon to be seen, neither overhead, nor through any vista between the cliffs. The boat rocked, the cliff-columns ran far out into the sea; an anguish came over her to know where the beautiful moon had hidden. She thought that if she could only get to the end of this corridor of rock she might be able to see, for then it would all be boundless ocean, with not a place in which anything could hide upon all the horizon. She put her hands upon the oars, which hitherto had lain idly in the rullocks, rocking with the boat; but before she could make one stroke with them, the moon swam round from somewhere, right out at the end of the long vista of cliffs, but such a large, awful, white globe that she started in her sleep, and woke. She fancied *as* she woke that she heard thunder; but even before her eyes were fairly open she became distinctly aware of a sound that was not thunder from the heavens, at all events. It was one solitary note from the old organ. She heard it as plainly as ever she had heard her mother's voice, and then the clang of a church-bell. It was half-past one. Her first impulse was to hide far down under the bed-clothes and say the Lord's Prayer; but she was not a coward, and so, drawing a long breath, she at last stepped out of bed and drew aside the window-blind. There was now a silence as of death all around her—not a sound could she hear inside or outside the house. Looking out upon the garden, and across into the lovely open country beyond, she saw that it was slightly raining. The sky was clouded, but full of moist white light, upon which the clouds seemed to

lie lightly and move brokenly in the wind. She turned round again, and got into bed once more.

She had not been in the recumbent posture long before she fancied she again heard a sound. Whatever it was, it had the effect of directing her eyes to the door of the room. Her head swam, and her heart began to beat violently, for she thought she saw it slowly opening from without. She began to pray—she knew not in what words. The door still fascinated her eyes. It certainly did move. She durst not scream; but, not knowing what she did, and simply by way of agonized appeal to heaven, she leaped out of the bed again, and fell on her knees at the side, still gazing towards the door. With indescribable horror she saw it positively pushed open about a foot—there was no fancy in the matter—a hand came in first, then an arm, and, last of all, she saw something which glittered in the faint moonlight flung towards the pillow she had that moment quitted.

XII.

For the first time in her life Tomboy fainted, but she passed unconsciously from the swoon into sleep, which continued for some time; when she awoke, with a start, she found herself lying in a cramped position on the carpet of the bedroom, with “pins and needles” in the one of her arms on which she had been lying. But it was now open daylight, and her first distinct thought was, of course, that the beautiful morning was with her, and that she was safe. And safe she was. But instinctively turning her eyes in the direction of the door, she perceived that it had not been completely closed; it was ajar, though very slightly. She might possibly have fancied that she had fallen or leapt out of her bed in the agony of an evil dream; but the fact of the door not being closed was sufficient to recall, in the shape of history, not dream, the circumstances of the night which had now passed away for ever. Naturally, her first clear impulse was to rise and look at the pillow. She fully expected to find something lying there—a knife, probably; or even a dagger—an object she had never seen in all her life. She found nothing whatever; but the pillow-case, one side of the bolster, and part of the sheet, were burnt into holes.

The solitary note from the old organ now remained still unaccounted for; but that alone. With a shudder which again sent this maiden to her knees, she divined in a flash of thought what had been done and who had done it. But the mystery of the organ-note invested the thing in her young eyes, as well it might, with an awful, preternatural character. In vain she endeavoured to persuade herself that she had heard the sound in a dream—that it was the thunder which she had fancied when the moon had swung suddenly round to the end of the corridor of cliff—she felt quite certain the organ had actually sounded in the dead of the night from which she had just emerged. And yet the least feasible idea in all the world was, obviously, that a person who contemplated throwing vitriol on to the face of a sleeping person in a house full of sleepers should do anything which should disturb the silence which seemed essential to secrecy. She gave up the mystery as insoluble; and it held its place in her mind as an awful, solemnizing adjunct of the very terrible danger which she had escaped.

Finding the house in perfect silence, and hearing without in the garden only the cheep-cheep of the birds, she sat, dishevelled and pale, on the edge of her bed, with her arms raised and her hands clasped at the back of her head. Lost in wonder, almost in a trance, she sat. In that position she inevitably caught sight of her own young face in the glass, if she only lifted her eyes up. At last, in making a movement forward towards the toilette table, in order to get her prayer-book or her bible, to one of which she was perhaps going to turn with something of the half-superstitious feeling with which she had, a little year or less before, turned to the Oraculum, she clearly saw her own face in the mirror before her. The hollowness of her eyes made her look again—with more intentness and more self-consciousness than she had ever looked at it before in all her life. The event of the night, the fact that somebody had just thought it worth while to attempt to mar it with the murderous scorching stuff, awoke in her a new thought. She saw and felt that she was beautiful. The fresh knowledge made her cover her face with her hands: she was filled with a new emotion that seemed as if it should have been a pleasure, but was in truth a pain. The discovery that she was lovely had come to her not from words of praise or looks of tenderness, but in the afterthoughts of an hour of peril passed, and in connection with an unlooked-for glimpse into the devilish malignity of another human nature.

Cherry was not speculative, but a sense, as strong as it was dim, rushed over all her being, of the awful nature of this mystery of malignity in a nature she did not and could not fathom. She was quite unused to prayer without a dictated form of words; but a vague prayer she could not help sending up to heaven that moment. "O God, cast this devil out of her!" would have been the words of it, if any words had distinctly passed through her mind at the moment. And then she felt calmer, and formed the resolution to say nothing about what she suspected, or rather knew, of the manner in which the linen had got burnt. The difficulty was how to manage matters so as to avoid any investigation being set on foot by the servants, and yet tell no untruth; but this she contrived to do, by taking into her confidence the maid she best liked, and urging her to replace the damaged by sound linen immediately, and to keep absolute silence about it. To make her promise this was a hard task, but Cherry succeeded at last; engaging to pay for new linen, in order that Miss Russett might be no loser. She had some fears, of course, that the servant-girl's love of gossip might prove too strong for her resolution; but, as it happened, the resolve was kept, for some time at least. Cherry steadfastly refused to tell her anything, one way or the other, about the matter. The linen was scorched into holes, she would replace it, and she wished nothing said about it,—that was all.

But I must not close the account of the night itself without adding that so perfect was the balance of the girl's nature, and so healthy her physique, that, after locking the door and placing a chair against it, Cherry again got into bed and slept soundly until late in the morning. When she awoke, once more the new consciousness slid into her heart—this time with warmth and music in it; and now it nestled there for an instant—the consciousness that she was beautiful. As she descended the great staircase, she met Miss

Luckin, dressed for departure. That inscrutable, shocking person slightly started, looked her full in the face, and drew nigh to kiss her. Cherry repelled the kiss; but felt a strange pity for the ugly girl, and a strange wonder, almost a rebellion, in her mind—why should these rattlesnake natures exist, and why should there be anything ugly in all the wide world?

From that hour Cherry was actually a different person; softer, more serious, more conscious, I will not say of herself, but of the life around her; moving about in the world silently, tenderly, like a woman, and not roughly and loudly like a hoyden girl. She dressed herself that morning with unusual care, and when she came down to breakfast Christina Russett was struck with her altered appearance. Naturally, she was rather pale, and, *that* catching the eye at once, a second and third glance discerned, however faintly and obscurely, that a change had come over poor Tomboy. Miss Russett was so profoundly impressed by it that she almost felt she had not done her justice up to this moment; she feared she had been treating a woman too much as a child.

"My dear Miss White," said the kind Christina, "will you do me the favour of stepping up with me into my study for a moment? I want to ask your . . . *opinion*, dear!" added Miss Russett, in an affectionate half-whisper, laying her hand on Cherry's arm. When they had got upstairs into the pretty little study, Christina carefully closed the door, and said,

"Sit down . . . here, my dear, close by me, so that we can have it all to ourselves."

And then she went on tiptoe to a choice little desk, and bringing it forward to the table, unlocked it, and, in the most gingerly manner, produced from its innermost recess a few dainty-looking letters in a man's handwriting.

"I need not say this is all between ourselves, Cherry?"

"Oh yes, Miss Russett," said Cherry, wondering greatly what was coming. Christina took out one of the letters, looked over it carefully, gave a gentle sigh, shook her head, and then holding it flat to her bosom with her left hand, said,

"Did you ever hear of Petrarch and Laura, dear?"

"Yes. I have read about them."

"I was afraid you might not, perhaps; but you pick up things in a wonderful manner."

"Petrarch wrote sonnets to Laura, I think."

"Yes! yes!" said Christina, clapping her mittened hands with pleasant gaiety. And then, handing the letter to Cherry, and putting an arm over the girl's neck—"Look at that, and tell me what you think of it!"

"It seems a love-letter."

"It seems a letter of *love*, dear," replied Christina, grandly.

"But it is not a sonnet."

"No; but there is some poetry at the end—on the other side, if you look."

"Oh! yes, I see—

"Our souls were made for such communion,
In perfect spiritual union."

Is he very religious?"

"He always puts that at the end of every letter. See," said Christina, handing them all to Cherry, who rapidly ran them over with her eye.

"Who?"

"*That*, dear, is the mystery! I do not know him; perhaps I shall *never* know him."

"He doesn't seem as if he wanted to marry you, does he, Miss Russett?"

"My *dear*!" said the lady, with rebuking eyes, "did Petrarch marry Laura?"

For a moment Cherry felt her natural wild gaiety rising in a sudden wave—she could scarcely help casting a wicked laughing eye upon Christina; but she controlled herself, and said,

"I see, Miss Russett, he asks you to send him a flower to the post-office, Hammersmith——"

"Yes, eleven miles off—he is so mysterious, and so respectful in his reserve!"

"That is, you are to do it if you reciprocate his sentiments."

"Yes, and *that* is what I wish to have your opinion about, Miss White. Would it, do you think, be prudent to comply with his request?"

"I am very young to be asked such a question; but it all depends on whether you do reciprocate his sentiments, I should say."

"Yes . . . that is where I feel a difficulty. He certainly appears to be of a lofty nature. Look, dear, at the purity of these letters. They breathe a spirit of poetry which I confess" Miss Russett again sighed and shook her head.

"I think most men wish to marry a lady when they love her?" said Cherry, inquiringly. "Petrarch would have married Laura if he could, I suppose?" She looked puzzled.

"My dear!" replied Christina, "you have not sounded the mysteries of the heart! Well, well, I will take time to think of it."

So saying, she put up the letters and replaced the desk.

Puzzled as Cherry was, she was touched as well as amused, and stood looking into Miss Russett's eyes, her own filled with gentle wonder. Miss Russett saw it.

"God bless you, Cherry!" said she, with a hearty kiss. "There! make haste home to your mother and Timothy."

She did go home to her mother and Timothy. Her mother began, in the course of a few hours, to notice, and with surprise, the increased softness, depth, and reverence not only of the expression of her face, but of her whole manner. She was an ill-tempered, gloomy woman; but she now began to treat her daughter with a new tenderness. She thought this change in behaviour and look was the sign of a work of grace in her daughter's heart. And indeed it was, though not in the sense in which Mrs. White referred to the matter in her prayers just at that time. Once a day Mrs. White always prayed aloud with Timothy and her daughter. The girl began now to be a little puzzled by the eagerness with which her mother, on these occasions, would refer to the "smoking flax;" but she was also pleased to find her mother relaxing in the severity of watchfulness with which she had

been accustomed to deprecate her "cuddling" little Timothy during the prayer-time. The child, now about two years and a half old, was bright and affectionate, but full of obstinacy—concerning the right regimen for which there was considerable difference of opinion, often running into direct practical conflict, between the mother and the daughter.

XIII.

Except Cherry herself, nobody in the village took so much interest in little Timothy as Mrs. Salmon. In the course of a few days, when Cherry, though still softened in manner and in countenance, had got back some of her old briskness of tongue, she made a call upon Mrs. Salmon. That kind, motherly person immediately noticed the change in her face.

"Why, your eyes look larger, Cherry! where have you been? You look as if you saw spirits and apparitions!"

Cherry smiled; but glanced at herself in the glass. "*I am pretty*," she thought; and then turned to amuse one of the little Salmons, very much disgusted with herself for having looked at her own face.

"Ah," resumed Mrs. Salmon, seriously, "you may laugh; I know Miss Russett and your friends there laugh at ghosts, them and their book-learning. But what I know I know. And *this* I know, that for more than a cent'ry, whenever anything is going to happen to anybody who is sleeping in that house, the old organ plays of its own accord."

"Good gracious!" said Cherry, turning pale, "I never heard that before!"

"There's many things in the great house as you must go to the little house to hear. And don't you go and mention it now I've told you—for it stands to reason it wouldn't be good for the school, though it's a good many years since the organ blew—at least as far as I know, it is. And then there was a murder. . . . Goodness me, girl, don't joggle the child so violent—you'll break his little back-bone."

"I feel a little faint," said Cherry, giving up the child to its mother, who threw up the window, and let in some air, which rapidly revived the maiden. But the least superstitious person might well feel "creepy" under similar circumstances, and she could not dismiss the old organ from her thoughts, though she endeavoured to occupy herself with the children; and Mrs. Salmon produced from a cupboard something in a wine-glass which she called "rum-s-rub," and—it is best to be frank—Cherry had some of it, though she took it with extreme reluctance, and nearly spat it out. She had the peculiar hatred of strong drinks which is often found in connection with a perfectly sweet and healthy body.

Mrs. Salmon was a large, tall, shapeless, soft-looking woman, with a face like an inflamed full moon, and neither eyebrows nor lips to speak of. She always looked well, and was always good-tempered; there was no guile in those little brown eyes, and no greediness in that little button of a mouth of hers. Of her figure it is difficult to speak except vaguely, for it never had time to settle down into anything permanent. It had a crisis about every eighteen months, and between the critical periods it was of necessity billowy and uncertain. But the number of her children never troubled Mrs. Salmon,

any more than the number of the asteroids, or the comets of our system, nor was she any more conscious of concurrence in one result than in the other.

"Well," said Tomboy, taking up one of the latest comers, and patting it thoughtfully as he lay across her knee, "he *is* a shrimp! This makes nine, Mrs. Salmon, and if I was you I should think it was high time to leave off."

"Lor, Cherry!" said the placid mother, "how can you talk so wicked? I must have my number, I s'pose, like other women."

"Well," replied Tomboy, "if they get smaller every time, they won't take up so much room, that's one good thing; what a shrimp he is, to be sure!"

"Cherry," said Mrs. Salmon, "don't let Salmon ever hear you call that child a scrimp, I beg of you."

"Oh, stuff and nonsense!" exclaimed Cherry, "he *must* take it as it comes. I've got no patience with the men. *Hallo!* is that a new pup you've got there?"

"New pup, yes," said Mrs. Salmon, with the faintest possible accent of irritation; "Salmon *will* do it. He only brought home seven and six on Saturday evening, and that bull-pup as you see. He will have as it's worth a sovereign if it's worth a penny; but I wish I could see the colour of the money, and them as likes might have the bull-pup. I had to put away my flat-iron and Salmon's shirt-pin, as his mother gave him at our wedding, for of course I couldn't put away the bull-pup; and so there you are again."

"Ah!" says Tomboy, patting the shrimp in long clothes harder than ever, "I'd bull-pup him if I was you. He goes out to earn his wages, and not to ruin himself with extravagance, and bringing home puppies, when this is the ninth. Bless him, then, he was a shrimp, he was! But what it expectee-pect-ee if its daddy brings home a bull-pup when he ought to bring home a joint of meat? But there, there, I didn't mean to speak disrespectfully of Mr. Salmon."

"No, my dear, I know it of you; and where no offence is took, none is intended, as the saying is. And Salmon says to me, 'Betsy, it's all speckilation. We must speckilate till the right card turns up, leastways the right dawg, and then I can pay up my fines, and be on the books again, and we'll have a house of our own.'"

Polite readers must not suppose there was anything unconjugal or unfriendly in this exchange of criticism about the absent Mr. Salmon, for such free comment is quite within the boundaries of ordinary etiquette in the village. Salmon's weakness is, however, now betrayed to those who did not previously know it—it is well understood among the villagers. Not content with the abounding life of his little household, this worthy man was fond of gathering about him a little population of the inferior creatures—rabbits, dogs, mule-canaries, and such like. On a Saturday evening, when his "heart" was quickened and his wits were slackened by the social draught with which he bade adieu to the labours of the week, he was but too apt to "speckilate" in what he supposed to be rare specimens of those familiar creatures. Dog-fanciers, bird-catchers, and rabbit-fanciers, who knew his weakness, traded upon it, and tempted him further and further onward in the perilous but fascinating path. He looked at it in the light of genuine mercan-

tile adventure; it really was—gambling. But, some of his early risks having proved unfortunate (lop-eared rabbits and recondite varieties of guinea-pig being difficult to rear, where there are eight little students of natural history eager for experiment), Mr. Salmon lost so heavily, that he was unable to pay up some “fines,” and thus dropped out of the ranks at his Building Society; known in the village as the Brickbat Brothers. Now, as his great object in life was to have a house of his own (subject, of course, to the usual mortgage to the society), what could he do but go on speculating in these small deer, until the luck turned? And what could Mrs. Salmon do but acquiesce, and cultivate her little noisy brood amidst all the responsibilities of a menagerie? Mr. Salmon was always good-humoured, like herself; he usually came home cheerful to excess, though scarcely tipsy, at the end of the week, with half his wages gone, and a fresh ‘dog in his pocket, or a piping bull-finch wrapped up in his handkerchief. Over the new prize there was usually a conjugal word-combat, but the happy pair always came to terms again over some anecdote of one of the children.

“Salmon,” says Mrs. Salmon, affectionately, and rather bemused with the Saturday evening strong-waters, “Salmon, that child is the very moral of you—he grows more and more like you every day of his precious life. If you’d only a-seen him this day, as he lay there on this very floor, picking out a wrinkle with a pin! Bless him, he knows how—he *is* the most intelligentest——”

To return to Tomboy. She was pleased with her visit to Mrs. Salmon and the children, and the “rum-s’rub” got into her head, and made her a little gay; but a new want had made itself felt in her bosom, though she could have given no account of it. If the church had been open, she would probably have gone inside, and said her prayers there; but, as it was, her feet turned instinctively towards poor old Mrs. Branch’s, where she was always certain of a welcome, accompanied by an inscrutable tenderness, which neither her mother, nor even Miss Russett had. In a very few minutes Mrs. Branch saw through the external gaiety of manner which came of the rum-s’rub, and when Cherry happened to draw a deep serious sigh, evidently unconscious of itself, she said—

“My dear, have you anything on your mind?” There was a brief pause of silence: then Cherry answered—

“Yes.”

Again, silence. Mrs. Branch asked no questions.

“If you could only take it to the Lord, my child—if you knew the throne of grace. . . .”

Again, silence.

“My dear, when we cannot speak to God, he can speak to us all the same.”

And now Cherry fairly broke down in a fit of crying, and embraced poor old goggled Mrs. Branch with all her heart. It was not the first time that unspeakable wonders, doubts, longings, and fears had been “taken to the Lord” in the same inarticulate shape.

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART I.—HIS BOYHOOD.

CHAPTER XX.

DR. ANDERSON.

NEXT day, Robert's foot was so much better, that it was resolved between the boys that Shargar should go to Rothieden to buy the string, taking with him his school-bag, in order to carry off Robert's Sunday shoes; for as to those left at Dooble Sanny's, they judged it unsafe to go in quest of them: the soutar could hardly be in a humour fit to be intruded upon yet.

Having procured the string and put it in his green baize bag, Shargar set out for Mrs. Falconer's. Anxious not to encounter her, but, if possible, to bag the boots quietly, he opened the door, peeped in, and seeing no one, made his way towards the kitchen. He was arrested, however, as he crossed the passage, by the voice of Mrs. Falconer calling "Wha's that?" It paralysed him. He could have made a rush and escaped without being seen, but that voice must be obeyed. And then the boots—he could not go without an attempt upon them. So he went to the parlour.

"Wha's that?" repeated the old lady, regarding him fixedly. "Ow, it's you! What duv ye want? Ye canna to see me, I'm thinkin'! What hae ye i' that bag?"

"I cam' to coff (*buy*) twine for the draigon," answered Shargar.

"Ye had twine eneuch afore!"

"It bruik. It wasna strang eneuch."

"Whaur got ye the siller to buy mair? Lat's see 't."

Shargar pulled the string from the bag.

"Sic a sicht o' twine! What paid ye for 't?"

"A shillin'."

"Whaur got ye the shillin'?"

"Mr. Lammie gae't to Robert."

"I winna hae ye tak' siller frae onybody. It's ill mainners. Hae!"

The old lady put her hand in her pocket, and took out a shilling.

"Hae," she said. "Gie Mr. Lammie back his shillin', and say 'at I wadna hae ye learn sic ill customs as to tak' siller. It's eneuch to gang sornin' upon him (*exacting free quarters*) as ye du, ohn beggit for siller. Are they a' weel?"

"Ay, brawly," answered Shargar, putting the shilling in his pocket.

He left the room without a word of adieu on either side, took care to shut the door, embezzled the shoes, escaped from the house without seeing Betty, went straight away to the shop he had just left, and bought another shilling's worth of string.

As soon as he got home he told Robert the whole story.

Robert started to his feet. He could steal the loan of his grandfather's fiddle, to which, possibly, he might be shown to have as good a right as his grandmother—at least his grandfather would have said so—but her money was sacred.

"Shargar, ye vratch!" he cried, "fess that shillin' here direckly. Tak' the twine wi' ye, and gar them gie ye't back."

"They winna brak' the bargain," cried Shargar, beginning almost to whimper, for a savoury smell of dinner was coming up the stair.

"Tell them it's stown siller, and they'll be in het watter aboot it gin they dinna gie't back."

"I maun hae my denner first," remonstrated Shargar.

But on a question of rectitude, the spirit of his grandmother would always break forth in Robert.

"De'il a bite or a sup s' gang ower your thrapple till I see that shillin'."

There was no help for it. Six more hungry miles must be trudged by Shargar before he got a morsel to eat. Nearly three hours passed ere he appeared. But he brought the shilling. As to how he got it Robert could not get a word out of him. For once Shargar was obstinate, perhaps sulky.

"She's a some camstairy wife, that grannie o' yours," said Mr. Lammie, when Robert returned the shilling with Mrs. Falconer's message, "but I reckon I maun pit it i' my pooch, for she *will* hae her ain gait, and I dinna want to strive wi' her. But gin ony o' ye be in want o' a shillin' ony day, lads, as lang's I'm abune the yird, this ane 'll be grown twa, or maybe mair, 'gen that time."

So saying, the farmer did put the 'shilling in his pocket, as if into a nest to be sat upon, and buttoned it up.

The dragon flew splendidly now; and so strong was it, that it was Robert's custom to drive a stake in the ground, slanting away from the direction of its flight, and tether the aerial toy as if it had been a grazing horse or cow, while he would lie by the stake reading *The Arabian Nights*, every now and then casting a glance upward at the high-flown dragon, alone in the waste air, yet all in his power by the string at his side. Somehow the creature was a bond between him and the blue; he seemed nearer to the sky while it flew, or at least the heaven seemed less far away and inaccessible; his soul was up with the dragon there, feeling as it felt, tossing about in the torrent of air. Out at his eyes it would go, when he had lain gazing for a while, and traverse the dim stairless space, to sport with the wind-blown monster. At times he would aid his imagination in a way common with boys. He would take a bit of paper, and making a hole in it, pass the end of the string through the hole, and thus send the messenger scudding along the string, athwart the depth of the wind. When one stuck by the way, as would sometimes happen, he would take a telescope of Mr. Lammie's, and turning it upon it, watch its struggles for a while, and when it broke loose, follow it careering up to the kite. Away with each successive paper his imagination would fly, and a sense of air, and height, and freedom, settled from his play into his very soul, a germ to sprout hereafter, and enrich the



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forms of his aspirations. And all his after memories of kite-flying were mingled with pictures of eastern magnificence, for from the airy height of the dragon his eyes always descended upon the enchanted pages of John Hewson's book.

One afternoon, as they were sitting at their tea, a footstep was heard in the garden in front of the house, and then a figure passed the window. Mr. Lammie started to his feet.

"Bless my soul, Aggy! that's Anderson!"

He hurried to the door. His sister followed. The boys kept their seats, but stared in the same direction. A loud and hearty salutation reached their ears, but the voice of the farmer was all they heard. Presently he returned, bringing with him the tallest and slenderest man Robert had ever seen. He was considerably over six feet, with a small head, and delicate, if not fine features, a gentle look in his blue eyes, and a slow clear voice, which sounded as if it were thinking about every word it uttered. Instead of giving him liver-disease, the sun of India seemed to have burned out of him everything self-assertive, and to have left him quietly and a little sadly contemplative.

"Come in, come in," repeated Mr. Lammie, overflowing with glad welcome. "What'll ye hae? An' there's a frien' o' yer ain'," he continued, pointing to Robert, "and a fine lad." Then lowering his voice, he added: "A son o' puir Anerew's, ye ken, Doctor."

Dr. Anderson stretched his long arm over the table, shook hands kindly with Robert and then with Shargar, sat down, and began to help himself to the oat-cake, at which Robert wondered, seeing there was "white breid" on the table. Miss Lammie presently came in with the teapot and some additional dainties, and the boys took the opportunity of beginning at the beginning again.

Dr. Anderson remained for a few days at Bodyfauld, sending Shargar to Rothieden for some necessities from the Boar's Head, where he had left his servant and luggage. Mr. Lammie was a good deal occupied with his farm affairs, anxious to get his harvest in as quickly as possible, because a change of weather was to be dreaded; the Doctor was fond of wandering about; and he did not object to the companionship which Robert implicitly offered him; so that before many hours were over the two were friends. Various things attracted Robert to the Doctor. First, he was a relation of his own, older than himself, the first he had known except his father, and Robert's heart was one of the most dutiful God ever made. Second, or perhaps I ought to have put this first, he was the only *gentleman*, except Eric Ericson of the blistered feet, whose acquaintance he had yet made. Third, he was kind to him, and gentle to him, and, above all, respectful to him; and to be respected was a new sensation to Robert altogether. And lastly, he could tell stories of elephants and tiger-hunts, and all *The Arabian Nights* of India. He did not volunteer much talk, but Robert soon found that he could draw him out.

But what drew the man to the boy?

"Ah! Robert," said the Doctor, sadly, looking about him, "it's a sore

thing to come home to one's country after being thirty years away from it."

He glanced all round at the hills—they were in the midst of a stubble field—as if thinking that the face of nature alone remained the same, and then his glance fell on the boy. And he saw a pair of black eyes looking up at him, brimful of tears, from each side of a big Roman nose, too big for the face in which it stood. And thus the man was drawn to the boy.

But Robert worshipped Dr. Anderson. As long as he remained their visitor, kite and violin and all were forgotten, and he hung upon his steps. To have such a kind-hearted gentleman—sad-hearted too—for a relation, was grand indeed. What could he do for him? He ministered to him in all manner of trifles, a little to the amusement of Dr. Anderson, but more to his pleasure, for he saw that the boy was both large-hearted and lowly-minded: Dr. Anderson had learned to read character, else he would never have been the honour to his profession that he was.

But all the time Robert could not get him to speak about his father. He steadily avoided the subject.

When he went away, the two boys walked with him to the Boar's Head, caught a glimpse of his Hindoo attendant, much to their wonderment, received from the Doctor a sovereign apiece, and a kind good-bye, and returned to Bodyfauld without venturing near Mrs. Falconer.

Dr. Anderson remained a few days longer at Rothieden, and amongst others visited Mrs. Falconer, who was his first cousin. What passed between them Robert never heard, nor did his grandmother even allude to the visit. He went by the mail-coach from Rothieden to Aberdeen, and whether he should ever see him again Robert did not know.

He flew his kite no more for a while, but betook himself to the work of the harvest-field, in which he was now able for a share. But his violin was no longer neglected. And he was soon consoled for the loss of his new friend.

Day after day passed in the delights of labour, broken for Robert by *The Arabian Nights* and the violin, and for Shargar by attendance upon Miss Lammie, till the fields lay bare of their harvest, and the night-wind of autumn moaned everywhere over the vanished glory of the country, and it was time to go back to school.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN ACT OF FAITH.

THE morning at length arrived when Robert and Shargar must return to Rothieden to be ready for school the following day. A keen autumnal wind was blowing far-off feathery clouds across a sky of pale blue; the cold freshened the spirits of the boys, and tightened their nerves and muscles, till they were like bowstrings. No doubt the winter was coming, but the sun, although his day's work was short and slack, was still as clear as ever. So gladsome was the world, that the boys received the day as a fresh holiday, and strenuously forgot to-morrow. The wind blew straight from Rothieden, and between sun and wind a bright thought awoke in Robert. The dragon should not be carried—he should fly home.

So after they had said farewell, in which Shargar seemed to suffer more than Robert, the good farmer shouting after them, as they turned the corner of the stable, "There'll be anither hairst neist year, boys," they went on till they got to the open road. There Robert laid his violin carefully into a broom-bush, the tail was unrolled, and the dragon ascended steady as an angel whose work is done. Then Shargar took the stick at the end of the string, and Robert resumed his violin. But the creature was hard to lead in such a wind; so they made a loop on the string and passed it round Shargar's chest, and he tugged the dragon home. Robert longed to take his share in the struggle, but he could not trust his violin to Shargar, and so was forced to walk ingloriously beside. On the way they laid their plans for the accommodation of the dragon. But the violin was a greater difficulty. Robert would not hear of the factory, for reasons best known to himself, and there were serious objections to taking it to Dooble Sanny. It was resolved that the only way was to seize the right moment, and creep upstairs with it before presenting themselves to Mrs. Falconer. Their intended manœuvres with the kite would favour the concealment of this stroke.

Before they entered the town they drew in the kite a little way and cut off a dozen yards of the string, which Robert put in his pocket, with a stone tied to the end. When they reached the house, Shargar went into the little garden and tied the string of the kite to the paling between that and Captain Forsyth's. Robert opened the street-door, and having turned his head on all sides like a thief, darted with his violin up the garret stairs. Then from the skylight of his own room, as he called it, he threw the stone down into the captain's garden and fastened the other end of the string to the bedstead. Escaping as cautiously as he had entered, he passed hurriedly into their neighbour's garden, found the string, and joined Shargar. The ends were soon united, and the kite let go. It sunk for a moment, then, arrested by the bedstead, towered again to its former "pride of place," sailing over Rothieden, grand and unconcerned, in the wastes of air.

But the end of its tether was in Robert's garret. And that was to him a sense of power, a thought of glad mystery. There was henceforth, while that dragon flew, a relation between the desolate little chamber, in that lowly house buried among so many more aspiring abodes, and the unmeasured depths and spaces, the stars, and the unknown heavens. And in that chamber, too, in which it had been seized by Granny, lay the fiddle free once more, yet another magical power whereby his spirit could forsake the earth and mount heavenwards.

All that night, all the next day, all the next night, the dragon flew.

Not one smile broke over the face of the old lady as she received them. Was it because she did not know what acts of disobedience, what breaches of the moral law, the two children of possible perdition might have committed while they were beyond her care, and she must not run the risk of smiling upon iniquity? I think it was rather that there was no smile in her religion, which, while it developed the power of a darkened conscience, overlaid and half smothered all the lovelier impulses of her grand nature. How could she smile? Did not the world lie under the wrath and curse of God? Was not

her own son in hell for ever? Had not the blood of the Son of God been shed for him in vain? Had not God meant that it should be in vain? For by the gift of his spirit could he not have enabled him to accept the offered pardon? And for anything she knew, was not Robert going after him to the place of misery? How could she smile?

"Noo be dooce," she said, the moment she had shaken hands with them, with her cold hands, so clean, and soft, and smooth. With a volcanic heart of love, her outside was always so still and cold!—snow on the mountain sides, hot vein-coursing lava within. For her highest duty was submission to the will of God. Ah! if she had only known the God who claimed her submission! But there is time enough for every heart to know him.

"Noo be dooce," she repeated, "and sit doon, and tell me aboot the fowk at Bodyfauld. I houpe ye thankit them, or ye left, for their muckle kindness to ye."

The boys were silent.

"Didna ye thank them?"

"No, grannie; I dinna think 'at we did."

"Weel, that was ill-faured o' ye. Eh! but the hert is deceitful aboon a' things, and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Come awa', come awa'. Robert festen the door."

And she led them to the corner for prayer, and poured forth a confession of sin for them and for herself, such as left little that could have been added by her own profligate son, had he been brought to a sense of the evil of his ways. Either there are no degrees in guilt, or the Scotch language was equal only to the confession of children and holy women, and could provide no more awful words for the contrition of the prodigal or the hypocrite. But they did little harm, for Robert's mind was full of the kite and the violin, and was probably nearer God thereby than if he had been trying to feel as wicked as his grandmother told God that he was. Shargar was even more divinely employed at the time than either; for though he had not had the manners to thank his benefactor, his heart had all the way home been full of tender thoughts of Miss Lammie's kindness; and now, instead of confessing sins that were not his, he was loving her over and over, and wishing to be back with her instead of with this awfully good woman, in whose presence there was no peace for all the atmosphere of silence and calm in which she sat.

After the confession was over, and the boys were allowed to go upstairs again, a new anxiety seized them. Grannie would be sure to find out that Robert's shoes were missing, and what account was to be given of the misfortune, for Robert would not, could not, lie? In the midst of their discussion, a bright idea flashed upon Shargar, which, however, he kept to himself. He would steal them, and restore them with triumph, emulating thus Robert's exploit in delivering from captivity his bonny leddy.

The shoemaker sat behind his door to be out of the draught. It might be possible to have a survey of a great part of the workshop without being seen, and Shargar could have picked Robert's shoes from among a hundred. Probably, too, they lay just in the spot where Robert had laid them, for

such affairs as arranging or cleaning were altogether foreign to Dooble Sanny's shop.

So the next day Shargar contrived to slip out of school just as the writing lesson began, for he had great skill in conveying himself unseen, and, with his book-bag, slunk barefooted into the soutar's entry.

The shop door was a little way open, and the red eyes of Shargar went peering about, especially in the corner by the door. He thought he saw the shoes. He got down on his hands and knees, and crept nearer. Yes, they were beyond doubt Robert's shoes. He made a long arm like a beast of prey, seized them, and, losing his presence of mind upon possession, drew them hastily towards him. This made a noise. The shoemaker saw them as they vanished through the door, and darted after them. Shargar was off at full speed, and Sandy followed with hue and cry. Every idle person in the street joined in the pursuit, and all who were too busy or too respectable to run, crowded to doors and windows. Shargar made instinctively for his mother's old lair; but bethinking himself when he reached the door, he turned, and, knowing nowhere else to go, fled in terror to Mrs. Falconer's, still, however, holding fast by the shoes, for they were Robert's.

As Robert came home from school, wondering what could have become of his companion, he saw a crowd about his grandmother's door, and pushing his way through it in some dismay, found Dooble Sanny and Shargar confronting each other before the stern justice of Mrs. Falconer.

"Ye're a leear," the soutar was panting out. "I haena had a pair o' shune o' Robert's i' my han's this three month. Thae shune—lat me see them—they're—— Here's Robert himsel'. Are thae shune your's, noo, Robert?"

"Ay are they. Ye made them yersel'."

"Hoo cam' they to my chop, than?"

"Speir nae mair quest'ons nor 's worth speirin," said Robert, with a look he meant to be significant. "They're my shune, and I'll keep them. Ye aiblins dinna aye ken whase shune ye hae, or whan they come in to ye."

"What for didna Shargar come and speir efter them, then, in place o' makin' a thief o' himsel' that gait?"

"Ye may haud yer tongue," returned Robert, with yet more significance.

"I was aye a gowk," said Shargar, apologetically, and looking awfully white, afraid to lift an eye to Mrs. Falconer, and yet reassured a little by Robert's presence.

Some glimmering seemed at last to dawn upon the soutar, for he began to prepare a retreat. Meantime Mrs. Falconer sat silent, allowing no word that passed to escape her. She wanted to be at the bottom of the mysterious affair, and therefore held her peace.

"Weel, I'm sure, Robert, ye never tellt me aboot the shune. I s' jist tak' them back wi' me, and do what's wantit to them. And I'm sorry that I hae gien ye this tribble, Mistress Faulkner; but it was a' that fule's wite there. I didna even ken it was him, till we war near-han' the hoose."

"Lat me see the shune," said Mrs. Falconer, speaking almost for the first time. "What's the maitter wi' them?"

Examining the shoes, she found that they were in a perfectly sound state,

and this confirmed her suspicion that there was more in the affair than had yet come out. Now, had she taken the straightforward measure of examining Robert, she would have soon arrived at the truth. But she had such a dread of causing a lie to be told, that she would take any roundabout way rather than ask a plain question of the suspected culprit. So she laid the shoes down beside her, saying to the soutar :

"There's naething amiss wi' the shune. Ye can lea' them."

Thereupon Alexander went away, and Robert and Shargar would have been only too glad to follow him. She neither asked any questions, however, nor made a single remark on what had passed. Dinner was served and eaten, and the boys returned to their afternoon school.

No sooner was she certain that they were safe under the schoolmaster's eye, than the old lady put on her black silk bonnet and her black woollen shawl, took her green cotton umbrella, which served her for a staff, and, refusing Betty's proffered assistance, set out for Dooble Sanny's shop.

As she drew near she heard the sounds of his violin. When she entered he laid his *auld wife* carefully aside, and stood in a listening attitude.

"Mr. Elshender, I want to be at the boddom o' this," said Mrs. Falconer.

"Weel, mem, gang to the boddom o' t'," returned Dooble Sanny, whom her tone irritated, dropping on his stool, and taking his stone upon his lap and stroking it, as if it had been some quadrupedal pet. Full of rough but real politeness to women when in good humour, he lost all his manners along with his temper, upon the slightest provocation.

"Hoo cam' Robert's shune into your shop?"

"Somebody bude till hae brocht them, mem. In a' my expairience, and that's no little, I never kent pair o' shune gang ohn a pair o' feet i' the wame o' them."

"Hoots! what kin' o' a gait 's that to speyk to a body? Whase feet was inside the shune?"

"Deil a bit o' me kens, mem."

"Dinna sweir, whatever ye du."

"Deil but I *will* sweir, mem; an' gin ye anger me, I'll jist sweir awfu'."

"I'm sure I hae nae wuss to anger ye, man! Canna ye help a body to win at the boddom o' a thing ohn angert and sworn?"

"Weel, I kenna wha brocht the shune, as I tellt ye a'ready."

"But they wantit nae men'in'."

"I micht hae men't them an' forgotten 't, mem."

"No, ye're leein'."

"Gin ye gang on that gait, mem, I winna speyk a word o' trowth frae this moment foret."

"Jist tell me what ye ken aboot thae shune, an' I'll no say anither word."

"Well, mem, I'll tell ye the trowth. The deil brocht them in ae day in a lang taings, and says he, 'Elshender, men' thae shune for puir Robby Falconer, and dooble-sole them for yer life; for that auld luckie-minnie o' his 'ill sune hae him doon oor gait, and the grun' 's het i' the noo; an' I dinna want to be ower sair upon him, for he's a fine chield, an' 'll mak' a fine fiddler gin he lives lang eneuch.'"

Mrs. Falconer left the shop without another word, but with an awful suspicion which the last heedless words of the shoemaker had aroused in her bosom. She left him bursting with laughter over his lapstone, but he little thought what he had done.

As soon as she reached her own room, she went straight to her bed and *disinterred* the bonny ledly's coffin. She was gone; and in her stead, horror of horrors! lay in the unhallowed chest that body of divinity known as Boston's *Fourfold State*. Vexation, anger, and disappointment possessed themselves of the old woman's mind. She ranged the house like the "questing beast" of the Round Table, but failed in finding the violin before it was time for the boys to return. Not a word did she say all that evening about shoes or fiddle, and yet the oppressed hearts of the boys foreboded ill. They felt that there was thunder in the clouds, a sleeping storm in the air; but how or when it would break they had no idea.

When Robert came home to dinner the next day, as he entered his grandmother's parlour, a strange odour greeted his sense. A moment more, and he stood rooted with horror, and his hair began to rise on his head. His violin lay on its back on the fire, but its back was nearly gone, and a yellow tongue of flame was licking the red lips of a hole in its belly—all its strings shrivelled up, save one that burst as he gazed. And beside, stern as a Druidess, sat his grandmother in her chair, feeding her eyes with grim satisfaction on the detestable sacrifice. At length the rigidity of Robert's whole being relaxed in an involuntary howl like that of a wild beast, and he turned and rushed from the house in a helpless agony of horror. Where he was going he did not know, only a blind instinct of modesty drove him to hide his passion from the eyes of men.

From her window Miss St. John saw him tearing like one demented along the top-walk of the captain's garden, and watched for his return. Nor had she long to wait.

Before Robert arrived at the factory he began to hear strange sounds in the desolate place. When he reached the upper floor, he found men with axe and hammer destroying the old wood-work, breaking the old jennies, pitching the balls of lead into baskets, and throwing the spools into crates. Was there nothing but destruction in the world? There, most horrible to think of, his "bonny ledly" dying of flames, and here, the temple of his refuge torn to pieces by unhallowed hands. What could it mean? Was his grandmother doing this too? But he did not care. He only felt, like the dove sent from the ark, that there was no rest for the sole of his foot, and like a heartless wild thing, hunted till its brain is of no more use, he turned and rushed back again upon his track. At one end was the burning idol, at the other the desecrated temple.

No sooner had he entered the captain's garden than Miss St. John met him.

"What is the matter with you, Robert?" she asked, kindly.

"Oh, mem!" gasped Robert, and burst into a very storm of weeping.

It was long before he could speak. He cowered before Miss St. John as if conscious of an unfriendly presence, and seeking to shelter himself by her

tall figure from the discovery of his grandmother's eyes. For who could tell but at the moment she might be gazing upon him from some window, or even from the blue vault above? There was no escaping her. She was the all-seeing eye personified—the eye of the God of the theologians of his country, always searching out the evil, and refusing to acknowledge the good. Yet so gentle and faithful was the heart of Robert that he never thought of her as cruel. He supposed somehow or other she must be right. Only what a terrible thing such righteousness was! So he stood and wept before the lady.

Her heart was sore for the despairing boy. She drew him to a little summer-seat that stood close by. He made no resistance, entered with her, and seated himself, still weeping. There they were safe even from the eyes of Mrs. Falconer, and Miss St. John began to do her best to soothe him. At last, sorely interrupted by sobs, he managed to let her know the fate of his "bonny leddy." But when he came to the words, "She's burnin' in there upo' granny's fire," he broke out once more with that wild howl of despair, and then, ashamed of himself, ceased weeping altogether, though he could not help the intrusion of certain chokes and sobs upon his otherwise even, though low and sad, speech.

Knowing nothing of Mrs. Falconer's character, Miss St. John set her down as a cruel and heartless as well as tyrannical and bigoted old woman, took the mental position of enmity towards her, and almost resolved to thwart her in everything possible. In a gush of motherly indignation against her, she actually kissed Robert on the forehead.

From that chrim he arose a king.

He dried his eyes; not another sob broke from him; he gave one look, but no word of gratitude to Miss St. John; bade her good-bye; and walked composedly into his grandmother's parlour, where the neck of the violin yet lay upon the fire, only half consumed. The rest had vanished utterly.

"What are they duin' doon at the fact'ry, grannie?" he asked.

"What's wha duin', laddie?" returned his grandmother, curtly.

"They're takin' 't doon."

"Takin' what doon?" she returned, with raised voice.

"Takin' doon the hoose."

The old woman rose.

"Robert, ye may hae spite in yer hert for what I hae dune this mornin', but I did it a' for your gude, as God in haven kens himsel'. An' it's an ill ploy to mint at playin' sic a trick upo' me, as gin I had dune wrang, and yer grandfather's property was to gang the gait o' 's auld, useless, ill-mainnert scraich o' a fiddle."

"She was the bonniest fiddle i' the country-side, grannie. And she never gae a scraich in her life 'cep' whan she was han'let in a mainner unbecomin'. But we s' say nae mair about her, for she's gane, an' no by a fair strae-deith (death on one's own straw) aither. She had nae blude to cry for vengeance; but the snappin' o' her strings an' the crackin' o' her banes may hae made a cry to be heard notwithstanding."

The old woman seemed for one moment rebuked under her grandson's eloquence. He had made a great stride towards manhood since the morning.

"The fiddle's my ain," she said, "and sae is the auld hoose. What's this ye say o' 't?"

"The fiddle's yours nae mair, grannie. And for the hoose, ye winna believe me. Gang and see yersel'."

Therewith Robert retreated to his garret.

When he opened the door, the first thing he saw was the string of the kite, which, strange to tell, so steady had been the wind, was still up in the air, still tugging at the bedpost. Whether it was the sting of the thought that the true sky-soarer, the violin, had been devoured by the jaws of the fire-devil, and that now there was no significance in the outward and visible sign of the dragon, or that he had a dim feeling that for him the time of kites was gone by and manhood standing on the threshold, I cannot tell; but he drew his knife from his pocket, with one down stroke cut the string in twain, and away went the dragon, free, like a prodigal, to his ruin; and with the dragon, afar into the past, flew the childhood of Robert Falconer. He made one remorseful dart after the string as it swept out of the skylight, but it was gone beyond remeid; and never more, save in twilight dreams, did he lay hold on his childhood again. But he knew better and better, as the years rolled on, that he drew nearer to a deeper and holier childhood, of which that had been but the feeble and necessarily vanishing type.

As Robert retreated to his garret, Mrs. Falconer put on her bonnet and went down the street towards the factory. It was years since she had been out twice on the same day.

Before she came back the cloth was laid for dinner, and Robert and Shargar were both in the parlour awaiting her return. She entered heated and dismayed, went into Robert's bedroom, and shut the door hastily. They heard her open the old desk, and then a little drawer within. In a moment after she came out with a more luminous expression upon her face than Robert had ever seen it bear. It was as still as ever, but there was a strange light in her eyes, which was not confined to her eyes, but shone in a measure from her colourless forehead and cheeks as well. But it was not till long after that Robert was able to interpret to himself that change in her look, and that increase of kindness towards himself and Shargar, stranger still when considered in connection with the holocaust of the morning. Had they both been Benjamins they could not have had more abundant platefuls than she gave them that day. And when they left her to return to school, she showed her friendly disposition towards them by the injunction at parting,

"Noo, be good lads, baith 'o ye."

The conclusion at which Falconer afterwards arrived about the matter was that his grandmother had hurried home, haunted by awful doubts, to make sure that the title-deeds, or whatever corresponded to such, of the factory, were still in her possession. They were gone—taken, doubtless, by her son Andrew. But when had he parted with them? Probably but recently; and hence the hope that her son was even now robbing her, and had not yet passed into the region "where all life dies, death lives." Terrible consolation to a mother! And terrible creed which made the hope that he was still working wickedness on this side of the grave light up the face of the mother,

and open her hand in kindness towards such a boy, sprung from such a father! Is it suffering, or is it wickedness, that is the awful thing? "Ah, but they are both combined in the other world." And in this world too, I answer; only, according to Mrs. Falconer's creed, in the other world God, for the sake of the suffering, renders the wickedness eternal!

The old factory was in part pulled down, and out of its remains a granary constructed. Nor did the old lady interpose a word to arrest the alienation of her property.

CHAPTER XXII.

"WHEN BALE IS AT HIGHEST, BOOT IS NIGHEST."

MARY ST. JOHN was the orphan daughter of an English clergyman, who had left her money enough to make her at least independent. But Mrs. Forsyth, hearing that her niece was left alone in the world, had concluded that it would be a great pleasure to have her society, in the expectation that she would pay a handsome quota towards the expenses of the housekeeping. Even before her father's death, Miss St. John, having met with a great disappointment, and concluded herself dead to the world, had been looking about for some way of doing good to other people. The prospect of retirement, therefore, and of being useful to her sick aunt, had drawn her northwards. She had not, however, found so much opportunity of the latter as she had expected.

She was now about six and twenty, filled with two passions—one for justice, the other for music. Her griefs had not made her selfish, nor had her music degenerated into sentiment. The gentle style of the instruction she had received had never begotten a diseased self-consciousness; and if her religion lacked something of the intensity without which a character like hers could not be evenly balanced, at least its force was not spent on the combating of unholy doubts and selfish fears, but rose on the wings of her music in gentle thanksgivings and hopes for the future; which, if their bright colours had yielded to her tears and their tints were now all neutral, were full, instead, of a dove-coloured submission, by which her mind was prepared for the reception of higher and better things. To her as yet the Book of Common Prayer contained all the prayers that human heart could need to offer; for what things lay beyond its scope seemed to her to lie beyond the scope of religion. Such things must of necessity be parted with one day, and if they had been taken from her very soon, at least she was free thereby from the necessity of keeping heedful watch lest some presumptuous feeling or hope should remove any of the old landmarks that divided what was God's from the neutral ground of humanity. She had now retired within the pale of religion, and left the rest of her being, as she thought, "to dull forgetfulness a prey."

She had little comfort in the society of her aunt. Indeed, but for shame of so soon-forsaking the path she had chosen, she would have been strongly tempted to return again to England in the first month of the trial. But there were then no Sisterhoods of Mercy in connection with the Church of England; nor was it at all so easy as now for one in her position to find the opportunity or mode of being useful in the world of suffering.

Mrs. Forsyth was one of those women who get all their own way by the very *vis inertiae* of their silliness. No argument could tell upon her. She was so incapable of seeing anything noble that she had no means of correcting her perfect satisfaction with everything she herself thought, said, or did. She had just illness enough to add to her sense of self-importance. She looked down upon Mrs. Falconer from such an immeasurable height above her that she could not be indignant with her for anything; she only gave a laugh now and then at the old lady's oddities and the way she brought up that unlicked cub of hers, Robert. She held no further communication with her than a condescending bend of the neck when they happened to meet, which was hardly once a year. But, indeed, she would have patronized the angel Gabriel if she had had a chance, and no doubt given him a hint or two upon the proper way of praising God. Otherwise she was good-tempered, looked comfortable, and quarrelled with nobody but her rough honest old bear of a husband, whom, in his seventieth year, she was always trying to teach good manners, notwithstanding the frequent result of a storm of swearing. From her Mary St. John could hope for no encouragement in her desire to be useful to Robert. For now she was fairly interested in the strange boy whose growing musical pinions were ever being clipped by the shears of unsympathetic age and crabbed religion, and the idea of doing something to make up to him for the injustice done him by his grandmother had awakened a slight glow of that conscious life which she seemed to have left far behind her. But although ere long she came to love the boy very truly, and although Shargar's life was bound up in the favour of Robert, yet neither stooping angel nor foot-following dog ever loved the lad with the love of that old grandmother, who would for him have given herself to that fire to which her love had doomed his greatest delight.

For some days Robert worked hard at his lessons; for he had nothing else to do. Life was very dark now, very gloomy. If he could only go to sea, or away to keep sheep on the stormy mountains! If there were only some war going on, that he might list! Any fighting with the elements, or with the oppression of the nations, would make life worth having, a man worth being. But God did not heed such things. He leaned over the world, a dark care, an immovable fate, bearing down with the weight of his presence the aspirations of all hearts, the budding delights of all children and young persons, demanding that they should all crouch before him, and uphold his glory with the death of every impulse, every admiration, every lightness of heart, every bubble of laughter. Or—which to a mind like Robert's was as bad—if he did not punish for these things, it was because they came not at all within the sphere of his condescension and care.

But this gloom did not last long. When minds like that of this boy have been ill-taught about God, the true God in his goodness will not let them linger too long upon the Moloch which men have set up to represent him; he turns away their thoughts from that which is too high for them as yet, and fills them with some of his lovely thoughts or works which may by degrees prepare the way for a vision of the Father himself.

One afternoon Robert was passing the souter's shop. He had never gone

near him since his return, but almost mechanically he went in at the open door.

"Weel, Robert, ye *are* a stranger. But what's the maitter wi' ye? Faith! yon was an ill plisky ye played me to brak' into my shop an' steal the bonnie ledly."

"Sandy," said Robert, solemnly, "ye dinna ken what ye hae dune by that trick ye played me. Dinna ever mention *her* again i' my hearin'."

"The auld witch hasna gotten a grup o' her again?" said the shoemaker, in alarm. "She cam' here to me about the shune, but I reckon I sortet her!"

"I winna speir what ye said," returned Robert. "It's no maitter noo."

And the tears rose to his eyes at the thought of his violin.

"The Lord guide 's!" exclaimed the soutar. "What *is* the maitter wi' the bonny ledly?"

"There's nae bonnie ledly ony mair. She's brunt to deith afore my verra een."

The shoemaker sprang to his feet and caught up his paring knife.

"For God's sake, say 'at yer leein'!" he cried.

"I wish I war leein'," returned Robert.

Then the soutar swore a terrible oath, and said:

"I'll murder the auld ——." The word he ended with is too ugly to write.

"Daur to say sic a word in ae breath wi' my grannie," cried Robert, snatching up the lapstone, "an' I'll brain ye upo' yer ain shop-flure."

Sandy threw the knife on his stool, and sat down beside it. Robert dropped the lapstone. Sandy took it up and burst into tears, which, before they were half down his face, turned into tar with the blackness of the same.

"I'm an awfu' sinner," he said, "and vengeance has owerta'en me. Gang oot o' my chop! I wasna worthy o' her. Gang oot, I say, or I'll kill ye."

Robert went. Close by the door he met Miss St. John. He pulled off his cap, and would have passed her. But she stopped him.

"I am going for a walk a little way," she said. "Will you go with me?"

She had come out in the hope of finding him, for she had seen him go up the street.

"That I will," returned Robert, and they walked on together.

When they were beyond the last house, Miss St. John said:

"Would you like to learn to play on the piano, Robert?"

"Eh, mem!" said Robert, with a deep suspiration. Then, after a pause: "But duv ye think I cud?"

"There's no fear of that. Let me see your hands."

"They're some black, I doobt, mem," he remarked, rubbing them hard upon his trousers before he showed them; "for I was amaisht cawin' oot the brains o' Dooble Sanny wi' his ain lapstane. He's an ill-tongued chield. But eh! mem, ye suld hear him play upo' the fiddle! He's greitin' his een oot e'en noo for the bonny ledly."

Not discouraged by her inspection of his hands, black as they were, Miss St. John continued.

"But what would your grandmother say?" she asked.

"She maun ken naething aboot it, mem. I can-*not* tell her a'thing. She wad greit an' pray awfu', an' lock me up, I daursay. Ye see, she thinks a' kin' o' music 'cep' psalm-singin' comes o' the deevil himsel'. An' I canna believe that. For aye, when I see onything by ordinar' bonny, sic like as the mune was last nicht, it aye gars me greit for my brunt fiddle."

"Well, you must come to me every day for half an hour at least, and I will give you a lesson on my piano. But you can't learn by that. And my aunt could never bear to have you practising beside her. So I'll tell you what you must do. I have a small piano in my own room. Do you know there is a door through from your house into my room?"

"Ay," said Robert; "that hoose was my father's afore your uncle bought it. My father biggit it."

"Is it long since your father died?"

"I dinna ken."

"Where did he die?"

"I dinna ken."

"Do you remember it?"

"No, mem."

"Well, if you will come to my room, you shall practise there for as long every day as you can get away from your grandmother. I shall be downstairs with my aunt. But perhaps I may look up now and then to see how you are getting on. I will leave the door unlocked, so that you can come in when you like. If I don't want you, I will lock the door. You understand? You musn't be handling things, you know."

"Deed, mem, ye may lippen to me. But I'm jist feared to lat ye hear me lay a finger upo' the piana, for it's little I cud do wi' my fiddle, an', for the piana! I'm feart I'll jist scunner ye."

"If you really want to learn, there will be no fear of that," returned Miss St. John, guessing at the meaning of the word *scunner*. "I don't think I am doing anything wrong," she added, half to herself, in a somewhat doubtful tone.

"'Deed no, mem. Ye're jist an angel unawares. For I maist think sometimes that my grannie 'ill drive me wud; for there's naething to read but guid buiks, and naething to sing but psalms; and there's nae fun aboot the hoose but Betty; and puir Shargar's nearban' dementit wi' 't. And we maun pray till her whether we will or no. And there's no comfort i' the place but plenty to ate; and that canna be guid for onybody. She likes floers, though, and wad like me to gar them grow; but I dinna care aboot it: they tak' sic a time afore they come to onything."

Then Miss St. John inquired about Shargar, and began to feel rather differently towards the old lady when she heard the story. But how she laughed at the tale, and how light-hearted Robert went home, are neither to be told.

The next Sunday, the first time for many years, Dooble Sanny was at church with his wife.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GATES OF PARADISE.

ROBERT had his first lesson on a Saturday afternoon. Eager and undismayed by the presence of Mrs. Forsyth, good-natured and contemptuous—for had he not a protecting angel by him?—he hearkened to every word Miss St. John said, and combated every fault and undermined every awkwardness with earnest patience. Nothing delighted Robert so much as to give himself up to some one he felt to be greater than he. His mistress was much pleased with the result of the first attempt, and even Mrs. Forsyth gave him two of her soft finger tips to do something or other with—Robert did not know what, and was glad to let them go.

About eight o'clock that same evening, his heart beating like a captured bird's, he crept from grannie's parlour, past the kitchen, and up the low stair to the mysterious door. Twice his courage failed him; twice he turned and sped back to the parlour, as if the ghost of a lovely lady had been behind him. A third time he made the assay, a third time stood at the wondrous door—so long as blank as any wall in the house to his careless eyes, now like the door of the magic *Sesame* that led to the treasure-cave of Ali Baba. He laid his hand on the knob, withdrew it, thought he heard some one in the transe, rushed up his garret stair and stood listening, hastened down, and with sudden determination opened the door, saw that the trap was raised, closed the door behind him, and standing with his head on the level of the floor, gazed into the paradise of Miss St. John's room. I will not attempt to describe his feelings. All before him was elegance, richness, mystery. But to peep into such a room was a kind of salvation to the half-starved nature of the boy. The indwelling spirit of womanhood radiated from everything. A fire blazed in the stove. A rug of long white wool lay before it. A little way off stood the piano. Ornaments sparkled and shone upon the dressing-table; the door of a wardrobe had swung a little open, and discovered the sombre shimmer of a black silk dress; something gorgeously red, a China crape shawl, hung glowing beyond it. Robert dared not gaze any longer; he felt as if he had been already guilty of an immodesty, and hastened to ascend and seat himself at the piano.

"Just think," he said to himself, "o' me in sic a place! It's a pailace. It's a fairy pailace. And that angel o' a leddy bides here, and sleeps there! I wonner gin she ever dreams about onything as bonny 's hersel'!"

Then his thoughts took another turn.

"I wonner gin the room was onything like this whan my mamma sleepit in't."

And the sad face of the miniature, and the sad words written below the hymn, came back upon him, and instead of beginning to practise, he bowed his head upon his hands. He was sitting thus when Miss St. John came behind him, and heard him murmur the one word *Mamma!* She laid her hand on his shoulder.

He started and rose.

"I beg yer pardon, mem. I hae no business to be here, excep' to play

But I cudna help thinkin' aboot my mother; for I was born in this room, mem. Will I gang awa' again?"

He moved towards the door. But she told him to remain—she had only come to see if he was there.

"I cannot stop now," she added; "but to-morrow you must tell me about your mother. Now sit down, and don't lose any more time, lest your grandmother should miss you."

Thus was this rough diamond of a Scotch boy, rude in speech, but full of delicate thought, gathered under the modelling influences of the finished, refined, tender, sweet-tongued, and sweet-thoughted Englishwoman, who, if she had been less of a woman, would have been repelled by his uncouthness; if she had been less of a lady, would have mistaken his commonness for vulgarity. But she was just, like the type of womankind, a virgin-mother. She saw the nobility of his nature through its homely garments, and had been, indeed, sent to carry on the work from which his mother had been too early taken away.

"There's jist ae thing, mem, that vexes me a wee, an' I dinna ken what to think aboot it," said Robert, as Miss St. John was leaving the room. "Maybe ye cud bide ae minute till I tell ye."

"Yes, I can. What is it?"

"I'm nearhan' sure that whan I lea' the parlour, grannie 'ill think I'm awa at my prayers; and sae she'll think better o' me nor I deserve. An' I canna bide that."

"What should make you think she will think so?"

"Fowk kens what ane anither's aboot, ye ken, mem."

"Then she'll know you are not at your prayers."

"Na. For sometimes I div gang to my prayers for a whilie like, but nae for lang, for I'm nae like ane o' them 'at He wad care to hear sayin' a lang screed o'-a prayer till Him. I hae but ae thing to pray aboot."

"And what's that, Robert?"

One of Robert's silences had seized him. He looked confused, and turned away.

"Never mind," said Miss St. John, anxious to relieve him, and establish a comfortable relation between them; "you will tell me another time. And don't mind what your grannie may think, so long as you have no wish to make her think it. Good night."

Had she been, indeed, an angel from heaven, Robert could not have worshipped her more. And why should he? Was she less God's messenger that she had beautiful arms instead of less beautiful wings?

He practised till his unaccustomed fingers were stiff, then shut the piano with reverence, and departed, carefully peeping into the disenchanted region without the gates to see that no enemy lay in wait for him as he passed beyond them. He closed the door gently; and in one moment the rich lovely room and the beautiful lady were behind him, and before him the bare stair between two whitewashed walls, and the long flagged transe that led to his silent grandmother seated in her arm-chair, and gazing into the red coals, with her round-toed shoes pointed at the fire from the top of her little wooden stool. (Somehow

grannie's fire, though always glowing, never blazed.) He traversed the stair and the transe, entered the parlour, and sat down to his open book as though nothing had happened. But his grandmother saw the light in his face, and did think he had just come from his prayers. And the boy found added favour in her eyes, now that she believed herself that the father for whom he had persisted in praying was not dead after all.

The next night Robert took with him the miniature of his mother; and Miss St. John saw at once that, whatever might be his present surroundings, his mother must have been a lady. And a certain fancied resemblance to her own mother likewise drew her heart towards the boy. Then Robert took from his pocket the gold thimble, and said,

"This was my mother's too. Will ye tak' it, mem, for ye ken it's o' nae use to me?"

Miss St. John hesitated for a moment, and then said:

"I will keep it for you, if you like;" for she could not bear to refuse it.

"Na, mem; I want ye to keep it to yersel'; for I'm sure my mamma wad hae likit you to hae 't better nor any ither body."

"Well, I will use it sometimes for your sake. But mind, I will not take it from you; I will only keep it for you."

"Weel, weel, mem; gin ye'll keep it till I speir for 't again, that 'll do weel enouch," answered Robert, with a smile.

The boy laboured diligently; and his progress corresponded to his labour. It was more than intellect that guided him. He seemed to have genius for everything he cared for. And the love he bore to his teacher, and the influence of her beauty, began to mould him after her likeness, so that he became nice in his person and dress—as far as lay in his power—smoothed the roughness and moderated the broadness of his speech with the amenities of the English which she made so sweet upon her tongue, became still more obedient to his grandmother and more diligent at school, gathered to himself golden opinions without knowing it, and was gradually developing into a rustic gentleman.

And now the love of nature so grew upon him, that it was not only in summer that he felt the gentle presence of a power that was in her and yet above her: in winter, too, the sky was true and deep; and the tones of the wind that roared at night about the goddess-haunted house, and moaned in the chimneys of the lowly dwelling that nestled against it, woke harmonies within him which already he tried to spell out upon the wakeners of sweet sounds. And Miss St. John soon discovered that he put expressions of his own into the simple things she gave him to play, and even dreamed a little at his own will when alone with the passive instrument. Little did Mrs. Falconer think into what a seventh heaven of accursed music she had driven her boy.

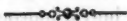
But not yet did he tell his friend, much as he loved and much as he trusted her, the little he knew of his mother's sorrows and his father's sins. Nor did he tell her whose the hand that had struck him down when she found him lying in the now vanished factory.

For a time, all his trouble about God went from him. For he rarely

thought of him at all. But the words that dropt now and then from off the shelves where his old difficulties lay fell like seeds upon the heart of Miss St. John, took root, and rose in thoughts; for the talk of a child even may take life in the mind of such a woman.

One evening he rose from the table, not unwatched of his grandmother, and ran swiftly and silently upstairs, in the dark, as was his custom, to enter the chamber of enchantments. Never before had his hand failed to light, sure as a lark on its nest, upon the brass handle of the door that admitted him to his paradise. Now it fell on something damp, and rough, and cold. Horrible, but true suspicion! While he was at school, his grandmother, moved by what doubt or by what certainty she never revealed, had had the doorway walled up with bricks. He felt the place all over. It was to his hands the living tomb of his mother's vicar on earth.

He returned to his book, pale as death, but said not a word. The next day, the bricks were plastered over. Thus the door of that bliss vanished from the earth. And neither the boy nor his grandmother ever said a word on the matter.



THE DOOM OF THE PRYNNES.

PART II.

MARK wrote too much, and hated what he wrote,
Till Agnes said "I must pen 'leaders' too."
Whereat he answered, "Here is my receipt,—
Sneer at the Emperor, Cobden, and John Bright,
Declare that Gladstone is too eloquent,
And that the peril of the land demands
A jocund premier.

"Prove that working men
Are brutal, fools, with Machiavellian skill,
That they will climb to power as Satan climbed,
To fall as Satan fell, and— Let me see.
No, that was Samson, drew the gates down with him."
And then, across the caustic of his words,
There dropped the wondrous nectar of his smile,
A smile as joyous, frank, and innocent
As that with which a babe awakes from sleep.

"Why fret your conscience, cousin, writing thus?"

So Agnes pleaded. Mark said, "Life is sweet."

"And roses are so dear." Reproachfully
She glanced to where, for nearly all the year,
A vase of roses stood beside her hand.

"They make life's sweetness. Agnes, sing to me;
'Tis better than rebuking—juster, too."

She, docile, sang a simple village lay
About a sunny morning.

"Down the mountain came the stream,
Leaping in the glowing beam
Of the daylight's brightening gleam,
On the sunny morning.

"Crimson foxglove, tall and high,
Bowed as though a king went by,
Heather stood up, proud and shy,
On the sunny morning.

"By the streamlet sat we two,
Throned among wild heartsease blue,
While he said 'Dear, I love you.'
Oh, the sunny morning!"

There came a sudden chillness: we looked up;
Within the doorway stood a figure grand,
A figure worse than horrid hideousness,
For this was horrid beauty. Tall and large,
With womanly dark hair that fell behind
A massive face, deep graven in strong lines
Around the lip and nostril, and the brow,
Where silken lashes, startled, stood upright,
Away from maniac eyes.

At length she spoke
In sonorous tones, that rolled upon the air
Like church bells tolling 'mid an earthquake's crash.

"A Prynné can only love a Prynné,
Doom one.

The Prynné who weds a Prynné, weds Death,
Doom two.

The Prynné who weds not Death goes mad, like me,
Doom three."

"Mother," was all Mark said: long afterwards
I saw his face in death, less rigid, wan.
Beneath his voice she seemed to shrink and fall
Suddenly, to a woman old and weak.
She crept to Agnes, saying, "Nestie, dear,
Don't you remember how I reared you, Nest?
Your mother died; she had the lighter fate."

"Yes, I remember."

Holy, calm, and sweet,
Came Agnes' words, as steals an *Angelus*
Across a battle-field.

"What was there wrong, that you have come away,
Was any one unkind?"

"Yes, most unkind,
I had a doll; oh, such a pretty one!
And it was lost; they would not help me look."

"My sister died, an infant; then this came."
So murmured Mark; his mother rambled on,
"No one would search, and so I stole away;
But still I cannot find it; will you help?"

"Yes, we will seek together; it may be
That we shall find it in the place you left;
Come, let us go."

So Agnes spoke, and wound her soft, firm arm
About the feeble, shrinking frame, as though
She fain would heal sick body and sick soul.

"I will come too," said Mark; his mother cried,
"Not him, he looks—as did his father once—
As though he loathed me; no, I will not him."

"I can take care of her," said Agnes, then.

"And who, of you?"

She smiled. "Oh, I am safe."

"Yes, I forgot; 'tis even as they say,
Seraphs are safe, within the jaws of hell."

Mark yielded; but as Agnes turned to go
She laid her little hand upon his arm,
With gentlest touch, and with sweet penitence,
As though she stole some filial right from him,
Said, "Dear, you know it is my mother, too."
So they passed out, bright youth and dreary age;
And as a staircase-light fell on them there,
We saw an awful likeness in the pair.

Mark laid his forehead where her hand had lain,
And sighed, as one who sighs out life in pain.
"Oh, God, 'twas this I knew, 'twas this I feared,
To see the trouble grow into her eyes;
To see my queen sink lower than the brutes,
And know it was my hand had dragged her down,
And know that I had done it, I, alone!"
Then he arose, and followed afar off.

The daylight waned, and shadows, gaunt and still,
Crept in, and darkly filled my cousins' place,
Until, for cowardice, I cried aloud.
Then Agnes came, and said that all was well,
And shared with me a sudden rain of tears,
Quick dried as thunder showers; then, like a bird
That sings its fluttered nestlings into rest,
She softly sang an ancient British hymn.

"Holy Father, God most tender,
We, Thy children, cry to Thee ;
Let Thy light shine through our darkness,
Till our earth-blind eyes shall see ;
See the thread that guides our wanderings,
See the hand that holds us free.
Holy Father, hear our cry.

"Holy Father, we poor lambkins
Out of bitter woe do bleat ;
Strong men drive us o'er the mountains,
Sharpest stones do pierce our feet,
While before us, and behind us,
Dewy grass shines moist and sweet.
Holy Father, hear our cry.

"Holy Father, those Thy servants,
Who did bring the good news here,
Said that Thou wast ever with them,
That they knew not how to fear ;
Art Thou with us, too, O Father ?
Suffer us to feel Thee near.
Holy Father, hear our cry."

Mark entered, silently, and listening, stayed
Till she had finished ; then he said to her,
"Saint Agnes, my Saint Agnes, shipwrecked men
Grow strangely bold when they cast overboard
That last of anchors, Hope ; until, at length,
Despair might pass for bravery. So, I
Dare now what I have never dared before,
And pray that, for a moment, you will stoop
From your high maidenhood, and kiss me, Sweet,
Before we part."

She stood before him, Ruth-like, meek, and still,
Until between her eyebrows dark and clear
He laid a solemn, sacramental kiss.

S. A. D. I.



IMPROVING CONVERSATION.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

I OBJECT to improving discourse; consequently, it has followed me from my youth up, by the great law of moral chemistry that acids have an ever active affinity for alkalis. According to my experience, improving somebody else's mind is the dominant British passion; they are always at it.

I was going down into Flintshire the other day; express, of course,—not that I was in a hurry to get there, I never am in a hurry to get anywhere, but always glad to be rid of the last place, and that amounts to about the same thing. I have a special reason for liking a railway ride unbothered with stations, because it gives me a companion;—the woman I should have married if we had met, which we never did.

She is shy, this siren of mine; needs some beguiling and magnetism, but when she does come;—well, I don't know anything of the joys of a Benedict, but if the care of a wife's luggage can compensate for the society of my witching lady, it must be a mysterious delight.

She was coming, I could feel the rush of her silent robes, her hand nearing mine; when, suddenly, there was thrust in between us a newspaper smelling horribly of damp type, and a throaty voice said—"Capital rub against Bright there."

"Bother Bright!" I ejaculated.

"Certainly, I quite agree with you; the ridiculous importance that has been given to that man is something disgusting. There never was a demagogue yet but was half made by persecution. I agree with you entirely, sir."

Now I call that one of the coolest pieces of impudence; a man makes a speech as long as a tunnel, and then says you said it. I found myself longing for my big brother. Merton would have put the fellow down; he has the Oxford stare; the family funds ran low by the time it came to my turn, and I was sent to Bonn. Not a bit of good that; you can't learn to snub a man properly out of an English university, unless you go very young into some of the government offices; or I have heard that pew-opening is fine training, but then one must wear a bonnet, you know.

My plague got to "the state of the country, sir," so of course he went on to Athens and America; but he didn't end there, that was the worst of it; did all the intermediate history; gave me a whole lot of useful facts, only they got mixed somehow. I know he said that Wickliffe was a revolutionist, and was put in pound for stealing a donkey; or if it wasn't him, it was some other fellow. Yes, that was it, somebody else did it, and Wickliffe was punished for it;—not a very revolutionary proceeding, that; I fancy we could match it in our time.

There was one thing clear: I should be, like the savages, improved off the face of the earth if this went on much longer, so I got out at Mugby (hail to the one man who can improve without exasperating us!) and changed carriages.

My new neighbours were two, and one of them had a coat of that peculiar cut which always looks as if it had been "Poor'd," as the children say, by a

lot of old women. But I did not fly. I had seen in the advertisements of that day's *Saturday*, that "a married incumbent, fond of tuition," was willing to undertake a pony, so there seemed some chance of the march of improvement, clerical, having passed beyond me. Besides, I have a partiality for clergymen; they are connected with the one great mental effort of my life.

It was this way: some years ago now, it was proposed at home to put me into Parliament. Merton said I must go in with a cry; this sounded queer, but he explained that he meant a grievance. "Something with figures does best, because the members fight shy of displaying their ignorance; why I don't know; it seems to me rather gentlemanly than otherwise. Well," he went on, "get up a whole lot of figures, Jack."

"What about?" I asked.

"Oh, some of the Departments; if you owe any fellow a grudge, take his. A little malice helps a thing of that kind on wonderfully; spices the flatness out of it; people don't know where the flavour comes from, but it's there, and they relish it."

Well, I owed lots of grudges. It was, and is, my deliberate opinion that man is one of the most unpleasant animals in creation; but then it is one thing to hold a theory, and quite another to take trouble about it; one must hate a man with barbaric intensity before one would go round the corner after him. I told Mert I had another idea, "The Ubiquity of Clergymen."

"Obliquity, you mean," he said.

"No I don't," I answered; "they're everywhere, up in the Andes, down among the Black Springs. Once, travelling in the Welsh Highlands, we did seem to have dispensed with the sanction of the Church, as our one companion was a man in a battered felt hat, and drab overcoat, whose discourse ran exclusively upon the cultivation of beet-root. Well, we did the upper Falls, and came down to where the rivers meet; there, waist-deep among the stones, we found our beet-root friend, saying, with an indescribable air of meek arrogance, 'Please help me out, I'm a clergyman.'"

Mert said he thought something might be made of this: "Undue preponderance of the ecclesiastical element, &c." So I set to work; got a lot of evidence, and proved, conclusively, that either one Englishman in every five took orders, or else those that did so must be the most predatory, I meant migratory, tribe in existence.

After all, it didn't do. Some bothering Commissioners had been working the same ground t'other way, and threw all the dirt in my face, like Antipodean moles. I never entered Parliament; a man that sold bobbins got my seat, and they say the House is not low enough yet!

This sounds like a discursion, but it isn't. I was thinking of it all the way, to drown my companions' converse; for the other man was Sanatory. Given, a working Rector, and an Inspector of Nuisances, and you may imagine the sort of stuff they talked.

I only know I scared mine host, a friend of Merton's, by answering his first inquiries with "A bath, dear fellow; before anything, a bath."

I was ready in good time, and found only the youngest daughter of the

house, Miss Lottie, in the drawing-room. If she didn't begin at once, as though she was firing behind range, "Do you like Wordsworth?"

"Well," I said, "I can't say I ever read anything of his."

"Oh, nor I, but he is so nice; all the people I know like Wordsworth."

Of course it was terrible to be put among the people Miss Lottie didn't know; but she mercifully started a fresh line, "Do you like Patti?"

"I should rather think I did."

"Oh, but her chin is too long, you know; none of the people I know like Patti."

This was conclusive again, and we seemed to be using up our topics with fearful extravagance. I began to feel really ashamed of myself, when the young lady entered on a third, with "Do you like Kant?"

"Not at all," I answered, with relish. This was clear ground, at any rate.

"I mean the German Kant," said Miss Lottie.

"The English is enough for me."

"Why, I did not know there was an English Kant."

"Then you must have lived all your life in the Happy Valley," I said.

English girls, as a rule, resent any allusion to their one great charm of freshness, and Miss Lottie was about to issue a manifesto on the number of wickednesses she was acquainted with, but an elder sister interposed—"You foolish child, don't you see you are talking of different things?—It is Kaaaant: my sister means;" then, as the younger moved away, "Lottie is a sensible girl, but she never can be made to understand that everybody doesn't know everything."

This was bad, certainly, but she was a girl, and by no possible circumbendibus could any figure of speech be made to include the eldest Miss Montgomery in that category. Motherly women are charming, and girls are the daintiest playthings; but there should be some place in which all women between twenty-five and thirty-five could be shut up. The same retreat would do for boys between fifteen and twenty-five; the two sets might spend their time in improving one another.

"So glad to see you," said Miss Montgomery; she always begins with that; partly, perhaps, because she is conscious of not looking particularly glad; partly because there is something in the phrase favourable to the display of the unexceptionable teeth that are part of her general superiority.

Of course I could only bow, and grin idiotically; but Miss Montgomery is a woman of remarkable directness; she had something to say, and she said it. "Have you not some property in Ireland?"

"Yes," I said, answering plump, like a schoolboy at an examination.

"I want you to tell me all about it."

I had no objection; in fact, have told the story before: how an ancestor of ours married a Miss Kilbogie, and acquired her estate; and how, they dying without children, the property has been knocking about in our family ever since. Every now and then one of us dies, and leaves it to another; new owner has been asserting for years that he is sure something might be made of that Irish land; sends down an agent, who remits a few rents, then writes to say that he was shot dead last night, and if we send another he'll be shot

too; general disgust, and determination to let well alone; Kilbogie left to itself for another generation.

I began to think it was really I that was going in for improving conversation; but Miss Montgomery undeceived me, saying, in the tone with which a late toast-master used to produce "Silence, gentlemen,"—"The subject is too serious for jesting."

I thought it was as serious to me as it was to anybody, but, of course, did not say so. She added, in a sort of rhapsodic indignation, "It might be made a little Paradise on earth."

I doubted this, as a Yankee would say, "considerably."

"What is the nature of the property?" inquired my Mentora, supplementing her decision.

"Well," I said, "there is a common, a bog, and a bit of a mountain; part of a high road that is always going to law, and a hundred or so of pig-sties, porcine and human."

"The bog is most advantageous," said Miss Montgomery; "there is sure to be bog-oak, and you could have a manufactory of brooches."

"I don't think I should care about that," I suggested.

"Oh, that does not matter," she replied, with ministerial frankness; "then there is the common, that should grow flax, and make Shetland veils. Can you knit, may I ask?"

"No," I admitted.

"Oh, that is a pity; every man should know how to knit. But I can recommend you to a person who would undertake that—an admirable woman, she can make stockings."

I suppose a woman who could knit a stocking could do anything, but I would rather she did not experiment upon me; so I said, "You had better let me turn the whole thing over to you, Miss Montgomery."

To my utter astonishment she suddenly dropped into silence, sitting motionless, staring down into the carpet-pattern.

Now I know every strong-minded woman has a crack in her somewhere; so I thought perhaps Miss Montgomery might be a spiritualist, and was waiting for some communication. The silence grew into something shivery, after such a pelting of talk. I was just thinking, "I hope she doesn't see anything," when she uttered a solemn "No!"

"I am very glad," I said, relieved.

Miss Montgomery raised her eyes, with the look a man puts on when he says "Sir!"

"I didn't mean anything," I said, confounded.

She repeated the "Sir" look with intensity.

"I did not mean any harm," I pleaded, in a state of collapse.

"Oh,"—she softened into a gaze of awful tenderness, like that with which a boy may sometimes be seen contemplating a muffin.

"Do you mean me to regard your proposal seriously, Lieutenant?"

"Yes," I replied, by this time reduced to saying anything.

"Then I must repeat with regret, 'No,'—marriage does not form part of my plan of life."

Marriage! I backed, I really could not help it, backed until my neck caught the brass tip of one of those abominable banner-screens that people with daughters will have sticking out from their mantelpieces. This finished the business; I was, to all intents and purposes, in a swoon for the next ten minutes. When I recovered, my annihilator had disappeared.

Miss Montgomery was mysteriously distant next morning. I did not press her for the reason; I never do press a woman for a reason. I did once; it was in my Boyhood's prime (big B, please). I loved, and wanted to be beloved by Angelica Moon. My income at that time was ten shillings a-week, subject to deductions. I pressed Angelica to declare the reason why she refused to marry me.

"Is it my poverty?"

"No!" she replied, indignantly.

"Is it my family?" Hers had come over with the Dutch.

"No!" she answered, looking modest.

"Then tell me, Angelica; only tell me, why you cannot love me, and I will be content."

Poor little thing. I pressed her too hard. She turned on me a long and searching look, and said, "I think—it must be—that your nose is too small."

Speech fails to convey my sudden revulsion from Love to Hate. It was well for the Annals of Crime that our marriage had not been already consummated; yet, seeing that this was my first revelation of the fact that I could be personally unpleasant to a young woman, I would hold it to be the most improving conversation that I ever had.

THE DOCTOR ONOFRIO.

ONE cold winter's morning, the Innominato, whose fame as a magician and astrologer had long been great throughout a large portion of Northern Italy, was seated in his chair beside the fire, which burnt brightly on the hearth. He was at the time deeply absorbed in his meditations, so much so, indeed, that his servant Pietro had three times knocked at his door to inform him of a new arrival, without his being heard. Although Pietro's orders were never to enter the room without having first received permission, he ventured on the present occasion to disobey them, and planting himself in a respectful attitude before his master, he waited quietly till he should become aware of his presence.

"You here, Pietro?" said the Innominato, at last. "Why have you disobeyed me? I told you never to enter here without my authority."

"Pardon me, your excellency," said Pietro, "but I knocked thrice without your replying, and I then ventured to enter, as the porter from the Hospice has arrived with an urgent message."

"From whom?"

"From a traveller who respectfully desires an interview with you."

"Is he of such importance that he cannot wait my leisure?" said the Innominato, somewhat angrily.

"Doubtless he would have done so had he known your excellency's orders. Nor would I have dared to intrude, but that the porter informed me the traveller is very aged and infirm, and appears to be suffering severely from the cold."

"In that case you are excused, Pietro," said the Innominato. "We ought not to let the aged and infirm suffer, to avoid a temporary inconvenience ourselves. But who is the traveller, and what does he require at my hands?"

"He is the Doctor Onofrio, lately a judge at Verona, and formerly one of the professors in the University of Padua."

"He must be a very aged man," said the Innominato, "eighty at least; but though he has years on his head, he has gained little honour and less love. Still, let him be admitted."

Pietro left the room, and the Innominato, as soon as he was alone, rose from his chair, and for some minutes paced up and down the room as he smoothed his long snowy beard with his hand, on which a gem of great price sparkled brilliantly.

"It is not difficult to divine what brings the Doctor Onofrio to me," he murmured to himself. "He feels his age and infirmities weigh sore upon him, and he comes to ask me to prolong his life; and for what reason? He cannot hope to be reinstated in his judgeship, for he must be aware that his infamous reputation is too well known for that to be possible. Is it to ask for wealth? That is more probable; but though he is far from being rich, he would hardly have taken so long a journey in this inclement weather on that account. Is it that he fears to die? Yes, it must be that has brought him here, and that alone. He wishes to make his peace with heaven, and he fears, that without my assistance, his life will end before he has succeeded. And he has good cause for his alarm. Few men carry on their shoulders a heavier weight of sins."

Suddenly the Innominato stopped in his walk, and, proceeding to a little room in the watch-tower which adjoined his study, opened the small wicket gate, through which he was able to view the whole path from the Hospice to the Castle. On looking out he saw Doctor Onofrio carried on a chair by two men, who with difficulty kept their feet, so fiercely did the wind rush over the snow-capped mountain to the north. After glancing for a moment at the Doctor, the Innominato, struck by the icy chill from without, closed the wicket, and wrapping his rich, fur-bordered mantle around him, he again entered the study, and seated himself in his chair by the fire. "The Doctor's fears must oppress him sorely," he continued, "or he would not have faced such a storm as now rages."

The Innominato now took up a vellum-covered book which he had been reading, and which he had placed beside his chair, and opening it, was soon engrossed in its contents. The Doctor shortly afterwards arrived at the Castle, and assisted by two servants was ushered into the study. The

Innominato received him most courteously, and taking his hand, led him, though with difficulty, to a chair by the fire opposite to his own.

"Pietro," he said, as soon as the Doctor was seated, "throw some more logs on the fire, and when that is done, leave us."

Pietro immediately executed the order, but before leaving the room inquired whether he should prepare a bed for the Doctor.

"That question I will answer you presently," said the Innominato. "Now leave us."

For some moments after the servant had left the room no word passed between the Innominato and his guest. The two old men formed a singular picture as they remained seated in front of each other. The majestic form, handsome countenance, and open expression of the astrologer contrasted strongly with the cunning, crabbed features—rendered still more so by the cold cutting blast to which they had been exposed—and the shrivelled emaciated form of the Doctor. The one sat erect in his chair; while the other crouched down in his, till he was nearly bent double. To judge from his appearance at that moment, he seemed to have hardly a week's life left in him—so infirm and debilitated was he.

After waiting with patience for some time, to allow his guest to recover himself, the Innominato commenced the conversation.

"I am aware that I see before me the learned Doctor Onofrio, lately a judge at Verona, and formerly a professor at Padua. May I beg to know the object of his visit?"

The sound of the Innominato's voice had the effect of recalling the benumbed senses of the old man, and, lifting his eyes from the fire, on which they had been fixed, he said, "Pardon me if I tire your patience; in a few moments I shall be more at my ease, and able to explain myself. At present I fear I should have some difficulty."

"Let me not hurry you," said the Innominato. "Possibly, however, it would save time if I stated your reason for visiting me. If I do so more candidly than may seem courteous, it will have, at any rate, one good effect—we shall be able to discourse more unreservedly on the subject afterwards."

The Doctor gazed at his host with astonishment, but said nothing.

"You are, as I said before," continued the Innominato, "Doctor Onofrio, lately a judge at Verona, from which appointment you were ignominiously dismissed—not for incompetency, but for dishonesty. Before you received that appointment you were Professor of Jurisprudence in the University of Padua; where, though your abilities were greatly admired, you were personally detested. Few men have led a life of greater wickedness than you have. Many times you would have fallen into the hands of the executioner, had it not been for the deep cunning by which you contrived to escape from the punishment you deserved; and this you did generally by throwing the blame on innocent persons, who were made to suffer for your crimes. You have, in your judicial capacity, oppressed the widow and the orphan. You have taken bribes from the rich to give unjust verdicts; yet your rapacity has availed you nothing, for your love of gambling consumed the money you so infamously ob-

tained. And you are now a poor man, having barely sufficient, even with great economy, to supply the wants of the short remainder of your days. You are aware that you are tottering on the verge of the grave, and you now visit me to try to induce me to use my skill to extend your life, which otherwise would so soon end. You see, Doctor Onofrio, I am well acquainted with your history."

Great, indeed, was the surprise of Doctor Onofrio at the words of the Innominato. As each successive accusation reached his ear his astonishment became greater, and he raised his head and body from their crouched position, and sitting erect in his chair for some moments, he regarded the Innominato with an expression of intense terror.

"Alas, sir," he said, as soon as he had somewhat recovered his self-possession, "I cannot offer any defence to the accusations which you have brought against me. I confess, with sorrow, that all you have said is true, and it was to implore your assistance I came here, hoping that in your charity you would help me in my present strait."

"In what way?"

"By obtaining for me through your art a longer term of life."

"And why should I do so?" asked the Innominato. "Should I be justified in sending back to society, for a longer period and with renewed vigour, such a dishonourable man as you are?"

"No, no, learned sir, such would not be the case," said the Doctor Onofrio, earnestly. "Believe me, I clearly see the error of my ways. My only reason for making the request is that I may have time for repentance."

"And why do you wish for time to repent? Is it not solely to avoid the punishment which heaven may inflict upon you, and which is so justly your due?"

"Indeed, you are in error," said the Doctor; "although I might naturally wish to escape the anger of God, I am, to a far greater extent, actuated by sorrow for the ingratitude I have shown for the mercies I have received at his hand. To make restitution to those whom I have wronged is another reason for imploring your assistance."

"What restitution can you make to those innocent persons who have either died under the hands of the executioner, or perished miserably in poverty, from unjust sentences which you, their judge, pronounced upon them?"

"Too true, learned sir, too true," said Onofrio. "To them I can make no atonement; but by good deeds in the future, I may, perhaps, atone in part for my wickedness."

"Could I but think," said the Innominato, after a few moments' silence, "that your repentance were real, I should be strongly tempted to assist you."

"Indeed it is," said Onofrio. "Try me by any means you please, and if I am found wanting, withdraw from me at a moment's notice the benefits you may bestow upon me."

"Let us suppose," said the Innominato, "that I have the power to extend your life for the period of a hundred years—that I can restore to you youth and strength, neither of which shall fade away, nor shall there be the slightest

alteration in your personal appearance till your death—and that I have the power of giving you gold enough to satisfy the most avaricious;—what would you offer me in exchange?”

A singular change came over the countenance of the Doctor as the Innominato spoke. The anxiously-imploing look which he had hitherto worn now vanished, and another of eager and intense anxiety, not unmingled with cunning, took its place.

“What would I give you, learned sir?” he said, “alas! what can I give beyond my gratitude and my unceasing prayers on your behalf? Those I faithfully promise you shall have.”

“For the former,” said the Innominato, “I care but little, and as for the latter, I positively decline to accept them. From such lips, I fear the prayer would be little better than a mockery. No, on reflection, why should I grant you a longer term of life? I have received no benefit from you; and why then should you expect one from me? You have not been accustomed to confer benefits without an equivalent.”

“If for no other reason,” said the Doctor, “let it be from charity. I acknowledge that I can give you no equivalent, unless you tell me in what way I can serve you. I will perform to the very letter whatever you may desire me to do.”

The astrologer remained silent for some moments, evidently watching with interest the greedy, servile expression of the old man’s countenance. Presently he said: “On consideration, I will grant what you wish. I will make no bargain with you, however, that I may not tempt you to break it. I will tell you my conditions, and if you accept these, you cannot escape from them. If you are really honest, you will have ample opportunity of doing a vast amount of good; if dishonest, you will bring about your own punishment.” So saying, he walked to a large chest, and raising the lid, took out a flask and a small drinking cup, both of silver, and a large empty leathern purse. He then poured out some ruby-coloured liquid into the cup, and afterwards addressed the Doctor in these words: “The elixir I have poured into the cup has the power of restoring to you both health and beauty, which you may retain for one hundred years. Whenever you are in want of money, you have only to wish for it, and you will immediately find a hundred zechini in this purse. The conditions, from which neither of us shall depart, are these: that fifty of each hundred zechini you receive shall be expended in building and endowing an asylum for destitute female orphans. Every time you fail to observe these conditions, the penalty I impose is that one half of the remaining portion of your new term of life for a hundred years will be lost to you without the possibility of your regaining it. For example, if, after you have received the first hundred zechini, which will be this day, and you do not before nightfall set apart one half of the amount for the purpose I have mentioned, the remaining portion of your life will only be fifty years. On the second occasion it will be but half the remaining duration of the term, and so on. Now do you accept these terms?”

“Most readily and most gratefully do I accept them,” said the old man,

endeavouring to put on an expression of great humility, through which cunning—not unmixed with triumph—was plainly perceptible.

"There is the purse then," said the Innominato. (The old man greedily caught it, and pressed it between his fingers, feeling if it contained money, but it was empty.) "Now drink off the elixir," the astrologer continued; "but before doing so, let me ask if you fully understand the conditions I have told you of."

"I do."

"Then drink," said the astrologer, placing the cup in his hands.

The old man swallowed the contents of the cup at a draught. The astrologer then took a wand and waved it gently over the head of the Doctor. Gradually all objects around him seemed to melt away, and he remembered nothing more till he awakened as if from a deep dreamless slumber, when he found himself standing by the sea-shore, near the present town Fucina, with Venice in the distance, lighted up by the beams of a glorious afternoon sun. But though it was Onofrio himself who stood there, how changed was he in appearance from what he had been when he quitted the presence of the astrologer! He was then old, decrepit, and shrivelled, but now he stood erect, a well-built, powerful, and graceful-looking man. The sordid garments which he had worn in the morning, and which then hung loosely on his shrunken limbs, had been replaced by a magnificent and becoming costume, fit for a young noble of great wealth and high rank. On his head was a velvet cap, adorned with an eagle's feather. He wore a tunic of the same colour, which reached to his knees, and which was fastened round his waist by a band of maroon-coloured velvet, richly embroidered in gold. From this on one side hung an exquisitely-chased dagger, with a brilliant ruby forming the head of the hilt; while on the other side was a leathern pouch of the same colour as his girdle, ornamented with his crest embroidered in gold. If any doubt existed in his own mind as to his identity, which would have been natural enough, considering how great was the metamorphosis he had undergone, there occurred a little incident which fully re-established it. After admiring the splendour of his costume, he placed his hand in his pouch, and drew forth the long but empty leathern purse, which had been given him in the morning by the astrologer. He gazed at it for a moment, and then said, "If you were but full I should then have little more to wish for."

He had hardly uttered the words when the purse became suddenly heavy, and thrusting his hand into it he drew out a number of zechini. The sight of the gold reminded him of the astrologer's condition, which had no other effect than to cause him to smile ironically as he replaced the money in his purse.

Having secured the purse in his pouch, he raised his eyes and saw advancing over the Legunes a gondola rowed by two men in rich liveries, while a third, still more splendidly dressed, and having the appearance of a superior servant, stood erect in it. The gondola approached the spot on which Onofrio was standing, and when it reached the shore the servant quitted it, and advancing towards Onofrio, said—

"I am addressing, I believe, the noble Count Onofrio de Bovisio? If so,

I am ordered to inform your excellency that this gondola has been sent to carry you to your palace should you desire it."

"And by whom was it sent?" said Onofrio, showing that his original legal caution was still alive within him.

"I do not know the gentleman's name," answered the man.

"Tell me, at any rate, whose service you are in," said Onofrio. "I should like to know something more about you before I trust myself in your power. These are not times for a man to place himself without caution in the hands of entire strangers."

"I am head valet to the noble Count Greppi; but for the time being I am at your excellency's service. My name is Antonio. My master was this morning on the point of leaving Venice to visit his estates in the Friuli, attended by only one servant, when a stranger called on him, and asked if he were willing to let a suite of apartments in his palace for the use of a young nobleman of high lineage and great wealth, who would arrive that afternoon, and who was without friend or acquaintance in the city. At first my noble master refused to take any money, saying that his palace was perfectly at the disposal of the expected nobleman; but the stranger declined to profit by the offer. He said that your excellency had great wealth, and was quite willing to pay for any accommodation you might receive. After considerable demur my master agreed to the proposal, and the stranger immediately paid the amount required. The count then left Venice, leaving orders that the servants who remained should obey you as their master. Shortly afterwards your excellency's baggage arrived, which I saw carefully landed and placed in safety. That is all the information I can give you on the subject."

"And who was the person who made the bargain?" inquired Onofrio.

"I cannot tell, your excellency. I never, to my knowledge, saw him before. He was dressed something like a foreign merchant; but spoke Italian perfectly. I cannot describe his features, as he wore a black mask, which he did not remove even for an instant. He will, however, be able personally to give you any further particulars you may require, as he is now waiting at the palace to receive you."

Onofrio made no further objection, but entered the gondola, and was swiftly rowed across the Legunes to a palace in the Grand Canal. On his arrival he was conducted by Antonio upstairs into a room, where he found a plainly-dressed individual of a somewhat foreign appearance, and wearing a black mask. As soon as the servant had left the room, the stranger, without removing his mask, said—

"I have this morning received a message from the illustrious Innominato, informing me of your intended arrival this afternoon, and ordering me to engage an apartment and suite of servants for your use. I have done so. The rent for one year has been paid in advance. The servants are ready at your call. Your luggage is in an adjoining room, and can be disposed of as you desire. I am aware that you have received a purse from my master which may at any time be replenished at your wish; and that certain conditions are attached to your renewed term of life. I will now leave you, and unless I receive an especial message from the Innominato to visit you

you will not see me again, except at your own request, and that but once."

"Will you tell me your name, and where I may find you?" said Onofrio.

"Neither are necessary," said the mask. "Take this ring," he continued, producing one of a very simple appearance, which was attached to a long loop of silken thread, "and wear it round your neck. If at any time you require my presence place the ring on the third finger of your right hand, and I will immediately attend you. Anything you may then wish me to perform I will do, and directly afterwards the ring will lose its power, and you will never see me again."

The mask now left the room, notwithstanding Onofrio's wish to retain him a little longer in conversation. He inquired of the servants if they knew who the mysterious individual might be; but no one could give him any information. Onofrio, after placing the silken thread with the ring attached to it round his neck, and concealing it beneath his dress in such a manner that it might not be seen, employed himself in superintending the unpacking of his baggage, and examining the contents of the different boxes. Apathetic as he habitually was, he could hardly restrain his expressions of admiration even before the servants, so valuable were the jewels, and so magnificent were the dresses they contained. No potentate in Europe could have owned a more valuable wardrobe than that which was in the possession of Onofrio.

The different articles being disposed of to his satisfaction, Onofrio ordered his servants to prepare his dinner, and to serve it up as soon as it was ready. While it was being prepared he threw himself on a couch in one of the reception-rooms, and gave himself up to meditation. Notwithstanding the promise he had made to the Innominato, to lead, for the future, a more virtuous and religious life, not a single pious idea passed through his mind, nor a thought of the condition imposed by the astrologer, to place half the amount of the zechini he should receive on each replenishment of his purse to the account of the charitable enterprise which had been fixed on. His mind was solely bent upon pleasure, and the most ready means of procuring it with least trouble to himself. Instead of there being any prospect of reformation in his conduct, there was every likelihood, from the current of his thoughts, of his being more wicked than ever. His present handsome appearance and unlimited supply of wealth would enable him to carry out any extravagance he might wish; while the shrewd lawyer-like cunning which he still possessed in the highest degree, as well as his facility for bribery, would enable him to escape from any difficulties in which he might find himself with the police authorities.

Dinner was at last placed on the table, and a sumptuous repast it was. Everything was abundant, and served in excellent taste. The cooking was admirable, and the wines of the finest quality. One of Onofrio's faults was that of indulging in the pleasures of the table, though not to such an extent as to render him open to the accusation of gluttony. On this occasion, tempted by the exquisite flavour of the wine, he drank somewhat more than usual, and after his repast was over he again placed himself on the couch to sleep off its effects. When he awoke, he found it was dark,

and called Antonio to bring him a light. Immediately afterwards Antonio entered the room, bearing an exquisitely-formed silver lamp in his hand, which he placed on the table, and awaited in silence his master's orders. For some minutes Onofrio said nothing, but remained in deep meditation. Presently recovering himself, he said to Antonio, "Come with me to my chamber and help me to dress. I shall spend the evening from home, and it may be late before I return."

Antonio attended to Onofrio, and assisted him to change his dress for one still more magnificent. When his toilet was completed he ordered his gondola to be brought up, and entering it with Antonio, whom he desired to follow him, he ordered the men to row him to the Piazza de Schiavoni. In a short time he arrived at the landing place, and left the gondola, followed by Antonio, whom he told to remain in front of the church of St. Mark till he should require him. He then mixed with the crowd in the Piazza.

For some time he amused himself by watching the promenaders, and by occasionally stopping at the stalls of the mountebanks and quacks, of which there were several. Presently he began to find a small crowd of idlers gathering round him, attracted by the splendour of his attire and the dignity of his personal appearance; for although it was now night, a clear full moon was shining. Being too proud to make himself an object of notoriety in a place of public resort, he quitted the Piazza and turned into the Chetto da San Felice, the principal of the many gaming houses in Venice, to which only noblemen who were well known were admitted. The dignity of Onofrio's appearance, and his sumptuous attire, being considered by the custodians a sufficient passport, they allowed him to pass without asking him any questions. The principal saloon was at the time crowded with noblemen who had congregated round the different tables, and were eagerly watching the players and betting on the success of the game. Their attention was so much bent on the play, that for some time Onofrio's presence among them caused no remark. At last, as he was standing by one of the tables used for the game of bassett (which had lately come into vogue in Venice), he made some remark to one of the bystanders, who turning round to answer him, was much struck by his appearance, and asked if he were not a stranger in Venice.

"I am," replied Onofrio. "I only arrived this morning."

"Would you like to approach nearer to the table, so as to watch the game more conveniently?" inquired the person who had addressed him. "It is now in great favour with us."

Onofrio thanked him, and the bystanders were then requested to allow him to approach the table. The request was courteously acceded to, and Onofrio now stood close beside the players, watching the game with great interest, though without taking any part in it. At last, however, he determined to try his fortune, and drawing out his purse, in which were the hundred zechini still intact, he began to stake heavily. Fortune at first smiled upon him, and he won a considerable sum of money; but his luck changed very soon, and he not only lost all he had gained, but a considerable inroad was made on his capital. He now also lost his temper, and getting

reckless, played at random. Bad fortune continued to follow him, and with such pertinacity, that before midnight he had lost the whole contents of his purse.

Beyond the momentary annoyance it caused him, the loss gave him little concern. Finding he was not in the vein for winning that evening, he quitted the rooms, notwithstanding the entreaties of the gamesters for him to remain, many of whom expressed their willingness to lend him money should he require it. With some little difficulty he found Antonio, whom he desired to search for the gondola, and being informed that it was in readiness, he entered it, and shortly afterwards arrived at the palace of Count Greppi.

As soon as Onofrio had risen from his bed next morning, he drew forth his empty purse, and wished that it might be replenished. The thought had hardly been formed when one hundred zechini were again found in the purse. He replaced the purse in his pouch, apparently feeling no regret that one half of his term of life had been shortened by his having neglected to apply to the pious purpose agreed on half the amount he had been in possession of the day before. He now entered a room where he found his breakfast already prepared for him. During the meal he occupied his thoughts in framing some scheme to pass the day agreeably. Of course no idea of study or any serious occupation occurred to him—pleasure, and pleasure alone was all that he desired. He already began to find life irksome without friends or acquaintances; but where was he to find them? True, there were many families in Venice with whom he had been more or less acquainted, but from prudential motives he did not dare to make himself known to them lest he might be suspected of witchcraft.

He now resolved that he should introduce himself as a stranger to some of the principal merchants and noblemen, and endeavour to become intimate with them, calculating that he should find the task all the easier from his being already aware of their peculiar habits. By cautiously working upon their good feeling, he might get invited to their houses. To do this he was well aware that he must assume a respectable and sedate appearance; and as soon as his meal was over he dressed himself in a sombre but rich suit, and leaving home without any attendant, he made his way to the Exchange.

For some time after his arrival there no good opportunity presented itself for him to make a desirable acquaintance, there being but few merchants of high standing among the crowd. Later, however, he was more fortunate. Near him he heard two gentlemen conversing angrily on some subject of interest, and presently others of the bystanders joined in the debate. Now it so happened that one of the disputants was the Signor Morini, one of the richest merchants in Venice. Onofrio recognised him immediately, having formerly sat as judge in a case in which Morini was interested. His altered appearance sufficiently securing him from being detected, Onofrio advanced to the group, and listening attentively, soon found that the cause of the dispute was that some goods which had been shipped to Cyprus had never arrived. Morini, the owner of the goods, claimed their full value from the proprietor of the ship, a wealthy merchant, who upon some legal objection refused to give payment. As soon as Onofrio understood the

cause of the dispute, he entered with great tact into the conversation, and by his judicious remarks in a short time engaged the attention of all present. Of course he took up the cause of Morini, and argued it so well that all (with the exception of the proprietor of the vessel) took his view of the question. The owner of the ship still continued obstinate, and Morini declined to argue the subject further, determining to take legal proceedings to enforce his claim. Before leaving the spot Morini not only thanked Onofrio for the lucid manner in which he had argued on his behalf, but requested as a favour that he would spend the evening with him, which invitation Onofrio readily accepted.

He was true to his appointment, and received a cordial welcome from Morini. An advocate of high standing was the only other guest invited, and for some time the three conversed together regarding the contemplated lawsuit. Skilled as the advocate was in the law, he had no difficulty in perceiving that the stranger was more learned than he, and after attempting for some time to take the lead in the conversation, he gradually began to tacitly acknowledge Onofrio's superiority, and listened to him with the greatest attention and respect. At last he was so struck with the vast amount of his legal knowledge, that he ventured to inquire whether he was not a member of the profession.

"I am not," said Onofrio. "I know nothing of legal matters beyond points connected with shipping. My father was a merchant of eminence in Genoa, and was concerned in shipping, especially in the latter part of his life. As he was then very infirm and somewhat suspicious of those about him, the principal part of my time was occupied in assisting him in getting up evidence and watching the progress of various lawsuits in which he was engaged, and hence my knowledge of such matters."

After Morini and the advocate had complimented Onofrio on the admirable use he had made of his time, the former introduced his guest to his wife and daughter, apologising for the absence of his son, who was then pursuing his studies at Padua, but who was shortly expected to return to Venice. At first sight Onofrio fell desperately in love with Morini's daughter. Nor was this by any means to be wondered at, for a more beautiful girl it would be difficult to imagine. She was a perfect type of Venetian beauty, her face being one of those which Titian, had he then lived, would have selected as a model for a Madonna. Notwithstanding all Onofrio's attempts to please her, it was easy to perceive that his feelings were by no means reciprocated; nay, she appeared to have an instinctive wish to discourage him. On several occasions he attempted to enter into conversation with her, but without success. She replied only in monosyllables, and those were uttered in a tone so cold as would have damped the courage of one not so deeply smitten as Onofrio. Whether she had a prior attachment, or felt an intuitive fear of him, it is impossible to say; most probably the latter. Onofrio remained with the family till a late hour, and then took his leave, receiving at the time a warm invitation from Morini and his wife to visit them again.

As he had not ordered his gondola nor Antonio to attend him, he determined to return home on foot. By chance he passed on his way the

Chetto da San Felice, and seeing lights in the windows he entered the house. He was received with marked attention by the players, who made way for him to come close to one of the tables. His mind being full of the beautiful girl he had just left, he hardly felt any inclination to play, but noticing the curiosity expressed on the countenances of the bystanders as to the stakes the rich stranger would make, he resolved to hazard a few zechini, and if those were lost, to leave the room. He placed them on the table with an air of lordly indifference, and the next moment they were gone. He was about to depart when he noticed a satirical smile on the faces of those around him, and he immediately ventured on another stake of equal amount, which he again lost. He now became quite angry, and played recklessly, sometimes winning a stake, but losing still heavier ones immediately afterwards. At last, when he had lost every coin in his purse, he turned round, and in a defiant, uncourteous manner passed through the crowd and left the room.

That night Onofrio's dreams were chiefly about Morini and his daughter. On awaking next morning he found himself more desperately in love than ever, and he determined to propose to her father for her hand. He had, however, sufficient discretion to allow a few days to pass before he made the proposal, and during the interim he took the opportunity of calling at the house more than once. On each occasion he was received in so friendly a manner as gave him good hopes that his offer would be accepted. Nor was he altogether in error on the subject. When he made his proposal to the parents, which he did in proper form, both Morini and his wife informed him that they considered the proposal most flattering, coming as it did from a nobleman of high standing, great wealth, and still greater learning. At the same time, their daughter's happiness was a higher consideration to them than any worldly advantage which might be gained by her marriage. They added, however, that without giving him any decided answer, they should always be happy to receive him as a friend, and if later they found that their daughter had no disinclination to the match, they would readily receive him as her acknowledged suitor.

Onofrio's offer having been communicated to their daughter by Morini and his wife, they noticed that she showed little pleasure at the idea of accepting him as a lover; but after the fashion of Italian young ladies of that period, she informed her parents that she would be entirely guided by them in the matter. At the same time she hoped that she should have ample time in order to know a little more of the character of her lover before anything was definitely decided on. Morini and his wife readily promised that her wishes should be entirely consulted in the matter, and they then conveyed to Onofrio their daughter's answer.

Onofrio now became a constant visitor at the house, and did everything in his power to make himself agreeable to the young lady. He presented her with many valuable gifts of jewels and other things likely to favourably impress the mind of a young girl, without making any very evident advance in her good graces. To meet the expenditure caused by these presents, his luxurious style of living, and his evening visits to the gambling table—which he invariably quitted a loser—he had had to incessantly re-

plish his purse, but without giving one thought to the condition attached to it. Ludovico, Morini's son, a bold, handsome, intellectual young man, had now returned from Padua, and to him Onofrio attributed the ill success of his suit with Agnese. Possibly he was not altogether in error in this, for Ludovico had taken a great dislike to Onofrio, in whose manners he pretended to find a vast amount of arrogance and impertinence. Indeed, on more than one occasion he expressed to his father his grave doubts as to Onofrio being a person of the high standing and good family they had been led to believe. Onofrio, on his part, easily detected the ill-feeling Ludovico bore him, and as he was not an individual likely to receive an injury without entertaining the wish to avenge it, the coolness between the two young men, as may be imagined, increased daily.

One evening Morini gave a grand ball, to which, of course, his daughter's suitor was invited. Onofrio, who was painfully aware how little progress he had lately made in winning the girl's affections, determined that evening if possible to obtain a direct answer from her. With that intention he resolved to make himself as attractive as possible. He was occupied for some hours at his toilet, Antonio assisting him, before he had completed it to his entire satisfaction. To do him justice, he had a magnificent appearance, and being himself aware of this, he calculated that he should that night receive a favourable answer. In consequence, when he left his dressing-room, he was in the highest spirits, and having told Antonio to see to the gondola being prepared, he entered the saloon, and walking up to the window overlooking the Grand Canal, he occupied himself in gazing out on the boats as they passed on beneath him, gaily humming to himself an opera tune then in vogue.

Seeing his own gondola approaching, and without waiting for a summons from Antonio, he turned from the window to descend the staircase, when he saw standing before him the man in the mask who had received him on his first arrival in Venice.

"You here, my friend!" said Onofrio to him, in a bantering tone. "I thought you told me when we parted that I should not have the pleasure of seeing you again."

"You forget one possibility I mentioned," said the mask, "that I might come on a mission from the illustrious Innominato, my master."

"Oh, true," said Onofrio, "that had slipped my memory. And what message may you have brought me from the worthy gentleman?"

"He bids me remind you that you have not on a single occasion kept your promise to set aside one half of the money you have received at different times towards the building and endowment of an asylum for female orphans. He instructed me to add that your tenure of life has now dwindled down to a few days, unless you perform rigidly for the future that portion of the condition he imposed on you, and to which you agreed."

"Really, my dear friend," said Onofrio, with a sneer, "I think you must have been dreaming. You cannot have received any message whatever from the Innominato. Your worthy superior could never have acted so absurdly. I am perfectly ready to abide by the conditions he imposed on me, and

as a man of honour—as I believe him to be—I am sure he will do the same.”

“On that point,” said the mask, “you need be under no anxiety. At the same time, let me beg of you to calculate how short a term of existence remains for you if you pursue your present course of life. Think how many times your purse has been replenished, and that on each occasion your duration of life has been reduced one half. Think how few days—possibly hours—now remain for you.”

Although the mask had spoken with great earnestness as well as friendliness of tone, Onofrio retorted by first bursting into a loud and insulting fit of laughter, and then inquiring whether the mask really meant to say that the Innominato had sent him such a message.

“I do,” replied the mask.

“It is really inconceivable,” said Onofrio, “how often a clever quack by a little knowledge may appear very wise. I am sadly afraid,” he continued, addressing the mask, “that your respected friend is after all but little better than an impostor, who has picked up a few nostrums from some clever physician he may have robbed, or perhaps murdered, and afterwards started in business on his own account. Two things are certain: of science he knows little, and of law still less. Now listen to me, you imagine I have but a few days, possibly a few hours to live. By my calculation I hold that I have ninety-nine years and eleven months still before me. Very likely ere that time has expired I may become as charitable as your master wishes me to be, but as you may perceive, I have no occasion to be in a hurry about it. Nay, do not interrupt me,” he remarked, noticing that the mask was about to speak. “I know well enough what you would say. I admit that my life will terminate when the hundred years shall have been subdivided on each replenishment of the purse, till nothing remains. But when will that be? You may divide a day into two halves, an hour into two halves, a minute the same, and a moment also, and reduce time into a millionth part of a second, and that may again be divided into half millionth parts. Subdivide each fraction of a moment in any manner you please, a portion will still remain for further division. It would not be a whit more difficult a task to measure eternity, or to divide time till none should remain. On the scientific point, then, you must perceive that your superior is an *ignoramus* (I make use of that term as the most courteous I can think of as applicable to him in the present instance), and his knowledge of law, if possible, is still more defective. Remember this for the future, that any bargain which binds a man to perform an impossibility is always considered to be null and void; so that I may remain contented with the remainder of my term of one hundred years, and I sincerely hope that for his own credit your master will say no more about the matter.”

The mask made no reply, and Onofrio, hearing Antonio's footsteps on the stairs, threw his cloak around him to leave the room. Before quitting it, however, he said to the mask:

“As we now understand each other, you will excuse me, I hope, if I speak frankly to you. I have no doubt your company is most agreeable, but it is in all probability more highly valued in the bosom of your own family

than it is by me. I am sure you can have no wish for my society, and I frankly admit I have none for yours. You would therefore oblige me by considering me a perfect stranger in future."

"Readily, if you wish it," said the mask. "You do not care, then, to see me again?"

"Such is my sincere desire, I assure you," said Onofrio.

"Will you oblige me then by giving me back the ring I gave you?"

"Stop a moment," said Onofrio, "that is a very different affair. It clearly enters into our contract. No, I shall keep the ring, and use it when I require your assistance. But remember, it is only on such an occasion I shall ever wish to see you."

So saying, he passed by the mask, and descending the stairs, stepped into the gondola.

When Onofrio arrived at the water entrance of Morini's house, he found a number of gondolas around it, filled with visitors to the ball. In spite of his impatience, he was obliged to wait for more than an hour before he could land, and he then mixed with the guests who were congregated on the staircase, waiting to be ushered in turn into the reception rooms. At last he reached the saloon where Morini, with his wife and daughter, had stationed themselves to receive their guests. As he entered he drew himself up to his full height, that he might show off to the greatest advantage his fine figure and magnificent dress. He then gracefully advanced to Morini; but to his great surprise he was received in the coldest manner. There was a peculiarly stern expression on the countenances of both husband and wife, while their daughter positively turned her head aside, and took no notice whatever of the obeisance which Onofrio made her. Great as was his annoyance at their behaviour, it was increased still more by the significant glances which he observed to pass between the guests assembled in the room, as from his habitually haughty and dictatorial manner he was but little liked by any of those whose acquaintance he had made. Neither Morini nor his wife, however, made any remark, and Onofrio turned from them to seek Ludovico, their son, that he might demand from him an explanation of the conduct of his family, conceiving that it was through his machinations that he had been so coldly treated. Ludovico was nowhere to be found, although Onofrio sought for him in every room which was open to the guests.

Dancing now began and was carried on with great spirit. For some time Onofrio stood waiting for the arrival of Ludovico, who did not, however, make his appearance. Not wishing to be thought out of humour, he at length invited a young lady to dance with him. He received from her a no very courteous refusal. Attributing this to her ill-breeding, he asked another, but with no better success. A third and a fourth he tried, but no one would accept him as a partner. He now saw clearly that a plot had been got up against him, and he resolved not to ask any other young lady to be his partner, and sat moodily aside nursing his wrath against Ludovico, to whom he perhaps rightly attributed the several rebuffs he had received.

Supper was announced, and the guests entered another room, and having seated themselves at the different tables, did ample justice to the splendid ban-

quet. When it was nearly over, and the hostess, accompanied by her daughter and many of the guests had left the room, Ludovico entered and immediately advanced to his father, and drawing him aside, conversed for some moments in a whisper. When they had finished, Morini followed his wife, while his son joined the guests who remained in the room.

As soon as Onofrio saw Ludovico at liberty, he advanced towards him, and touching him on the arm, said, in a stern and threatening tone,

"I wish to have a word with you, sir. I have been insulted here to-night, and I demand from you an explanation of the treatment I have received."

"And you shall have one, I promise you," said the young man, in a low tone of voice; "but not now, not now. It would be unmannerly to intrude our disputes upon the company."

"I will have no shuffling, sir," said Onofrio, raising his voice so that he was heard over the whole room. "I have been insulted before your friends, and by them likewise, and now is the time to demand an explanation. Will you tell me what it all means?"

"Not now," said Ludovico, evidently repressing his anger with great difficulty. "Not now, but to-morrow I promise you shall have a full explanation."

"To-morrow will not do, sir," said Onofrio. "You are simply putting it off that you may have time to form some excuse, or perhaps that you may be able to leave Venice, and thus escape from me."

Indignation for a moment deprived Ludovico of all power of speech, and one of his friends took him by the arm to lead him away. Onofrio now seemed almost beside himself with rage, and followed Ludovico, exclaiming in a loud voice to the bystanders,

"This fellow is a coward, he has insulted me, and is afraid to meet me."

To this insult Ludovico merely answered, "To-morrow I will prove to you that I am no coward," and went forward as if to leave the room.

Onofrio, now goaded to desperation, drew off his glove, and with it struck Ludovico across the face. At this gross insult Ludovico placed his hand on his dagger to draw it, but a number of young men who had gathered round them interposed to prevent him from doing so. Ludovico, finding he could not draw his dagger, said to Onofrio, in a loud voice,

"Once more, sir, I promise you that to-morrow I will take ample satisfaction for this insult. Listen to me, my friends," he continued, addressing those around him, "we have discovered this fellow to be an impostor. I have long suspected it, and to-day I have received the proof. He has intruded himself into this house under the pretext that he was the son of a noble merchant in Genoa. Not only have we found his statements to be untrue, but I have this evening received further information respecting him. I have every reason to believe that he is either the son or a near relative of the infamous Judge Onofrio of Verona, who was ignominiously deprived of his office and expelled the country. The money this fellow is squandering in Venice is doubtless the fruit of the frauds and extortions which were committed by his relative. I have great reason to believe that in the course of a few days a great deal more to his discredit will be brought against him. He is in every way unworthy of the acquaintance of honourable cavaliers."

"We have long suspected it," said several voices. "He has behaved this evening like a common ruffian. Do not interfere, Ludovico; we will soon rid the house of him."

A number of young men now seized Onofrio, and tore him out of the room, threatening him with death if he attempted to enter it again. They then returned to the saloon, where they met Morini, who had been in another apartment during the dispute. They advised him to apply next day to the police for protection, as they were assured Onofrio was a dangerous and dishonourable fellow, who ought to be compelled to give a strict account of himself, or be obliged to leave the city.

As soon as Onofrio was on the water-steps of the house, he looked around him for his gondola, and found it was drawn up close beside the door. He leaped into it, and the rowers immediately began to put themselves into their places to move the boat through the crowd of others by which it was surrounded.

"Stay where you are," said Onofrio, angrily. "Be ready to start the moment I tell you, but do not move until I give the order." He then threw himself on a seat under the covering, and, drawing his dagger, watched the door of Morini's house, with the expression of a tiger crouching for its prey. Presently the guests began to leave, and one by one their gondolas were called up to receive them. When almost all had departed, only two or three other gondolas remained besides his own, and these were close to the entrance door. Onofrio's attention was attracted by a voice inside the house, which he thought he recognised, and he listened anxiously. No, he was not mistaken, it was Ludovico's voice. A moment afterwards the young man himself appeared. On his arm leaned a lady, whom he was conducting to her gondola. It was now the time for Onofrio to act. He crept from under the canvas, and, leaping on to the steps, he plunged his dagger into Ludovico's heart with such force that he left the weapon in the body of his victim. The deed accomplished, he jumped into his gondola, exclaiming to his men, "Row for your lives, delay not a moment!"

The rowers, however, who had witnessed the deed, stood motionless with horror. Onofrio was on the point of repeating his order, but before he could utter a word a rower of one of the other gondolas seized him by the throat. Onofrio used so much violence in the attempt to release himself from the rower's grasp as to cause the gondola to roll violently, and both fell into the water. Though the man continued to hold Onofrio by the throat, his presence of mind did not for a moment desert him; he remembered that he had a long space of grace to live, and therefore attempted to keep his opponent as long as possible under water to drown him. But the gondolier was a bold powerful man, and an excellent swimmer. Several times he contrived to rise to the surface of the water to take breath, and still kept fast hold of his opponent, but on each occasion he was dragged beneath it again by the almost superhuman efforts of Onofrio. At last the other gondoliers recovered their presence of mind, and, rowing after the combatants, managed with some difficulty to secure them. An armed police boat, attracted by the noise, now approached, and the officer in command, hearing that Onofrio had committed

a murder, immediately arrested him, and had him conveyed to the prison beside the Doge's palace, where he was placed in the custody of the officials.

On his entrance into the receiving room of the prison, he was desired to state his name, place of birth, his occupation and business at Venice. His answers were of the most unsatisfactory description, for he plainly saw the necessity of replying with great caution. The questions over, he was searched, and on him was found a purse containing a hundred zechini. The officer on duty being about to take possession of the purse, Onofrio made so violent a spring to snatch it from him, that he nearly threw over the two soldiers who held him. Finding himself baffled in his attempts to regain the purse, and knowing well how terrible a loss it would be to him, he imprudently made the officer an offer of the gold, if he would allow him to retain the empty purse. With real or assumed indignation the proposal was refused, and Onofrio was ordered to be incarcerated in one of the lower rooms of the prison cells, in which only the worst of culprits were confined. This order was immediately carried out, and Onofrio, with his clothes still saturated with sea water, was thrust into a dark cell, in which it was impossible for a ray of daylight to enter.

He now felt carefully all round the cell, but he could find nothing of furniture in it, save a sort of bare wooden bedstead, raised about a foot from the ground. On this he seated himself, and attempted to reflect calmly on the position he was in. Looking at it in any way he would, nothing could well be more gloomy. True, he felt assured he should escape death, but he held no security against torture and the galleys. There was now no time to be lost, and he must immediately decide upon some expedient. His purse had been taken from him, so he could have no opportunity of bribing the gaolers. There still, however, remained one chance for him, and he now resolved to avail himself of it. When the soldiers examined him, they had omitted to notice the thin gold ring hanging by the silken thread round his neck. He immediately detached the ring from the thread, and placing it, as directed, on the third finger of his right hand, the mysterious masked stranger, holding a small lighted lamp in his hand, stood before him.

"I am here at your command," said he to Onofrio. "What are your wishes?"

"Restore my purse to me, and remove me from this prison to any spot you please beyond the Venetian territory," was Onofrio's answer.

The mask made no reply, but vanished in a moment, leaving Onofrio in the dense darkness of his cell.

As soon as he had somewhat recovered from his surprise at the sudden disappearance of the mask, he found his purse in his right hand, but it was empty. No matter, he thought to himself, as soon as he had realized the fact that the zechini had been taken from the purse—no matter; and he immediately wished it to be replenished. To his intense astonishment as well as terror, the purse continued to be empty. Again and again he repeated the wish, but without any better success attending it; not one coin came into the purse. In his astonishment he attempted to ascertain the cause of this. Could it really be that he had outwitted himself in his legal quibble upon the

point that time could not be subdivided until nothing remained; and that he had neutralized the magic power the Innominato had given to the purse, as well as the conditions? It flashed through his mind that all the conditions might now be null and void; and not simply that which related to his side of the question. So powerful was the effect the idea produced on him that, as he sat there, he seemed to sink under it. A feeling of excessive weakness came over him, so that he could not hold himself erect, but bent forward, until his head nearly approached his knees. The terrible idea that his purse was now valueless to him weighed so painfully on his mind that he had taken no notice of a glimmering of daylight which had appeared in his cell, and which gradually increased in power. At last he became aware that some one was standing before him, and he was about to raise his eyes to discover who it might be, when a voice he had heard before exclaimed,

"There will be no necessity for your preparing a bed for the Doctor Onofrio, as he must immediately return to the Hospice. See that every attention is paid to him there."

Onofrio, in a state of intense surprise, now raised his head, and found himself again a miserable old man, seated in a chair in the study of the Innominato, who stood before him, with an expression of great indignation on his face.

"Doctor Onofrio," he said, in a stern voice, "little more conversation need pass between us. You have perfectly taught me your real character, and the amount of reliance to be placed in you. Take my advice. Make the best use of the few remaining hours of your life; for you have much to do and little time to do it in. Nay, not a word," he continued, noticing Onofrio placing his hands together in an imploring manner, "not a word. Pietro, help the Doctor from the room."

With difficulty the servants placed the Doctor in the chair in which he had been brought to the Castle, and conveyed him to the Hospice. The same evening he was taken alarmingly ill, and a priest was sent for to attend him. After hearing Onofrio's confession, he remained by his bedside till the next morning, when the wretched man expired. He was buried next day without a tear or regret, or a mourner to follow him to the grave. One circumstance connected with Onofrio's memory still remains to be told. The Innominato had ordered a large black wooden cross to be erected at the head of his grave. The order was obeyed, and the cross placed on the spot indicated the evening after the funeral. The next morning not a vestige of it was to be seen, nor could any account be rendered of its disappearance, although the strictest inquiries were made on the subject.

WILLIAM GILBERT.



HABITS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

HABITS are not to be stigmatised as "tricks," but there are many tricks that become habits, and a good many habits lead to tricks. There is an affinity between them; yet certain habits are excellent things, while tricks can never be anything but intolerable. 'Tis as well to try and warn oneself by observation when habits are likely to degenerate into tricks, and to find out how far we may indulge our special idiosyncrasy, so as not to jostle against those of our neighbours. There can be little doubt that, as we are each born with countenance, features, and other personalities distinctive and different from the rest of the world, so are the fancies, quirks, virtues, and vices of our character different from those around us.

From the very cradle these signs of idiosyncrasy are apparent. One baby will early adopt the consoling process of sucking its thumb, and thus being contented, while another will roar to suffocation, without the least attempt at any self-comfort. Two children between three and four years of age were sent into the drawing-room to be kept quiet during a domestic crisis. One was instantly attracted by a new hearth-brush, and asked leave to play with it. As it was essential that the utmost silence should reign in the house, it was given him. He sat down in form like the letter L, and began to talk to his brush. The other, after fidgetting, whining, and being on the verge of a war every ten minutes, was at last also given a brush, in the hope of its producing a similar effect. But while the first amply amused himself with either (for the restless child would have both), the second was soon as restless as ever, and had to be handed over to more stern authority. The other played on and on with his brush. At the end of two hours he was asked if he was not tired of sitting so long in one posture. "I don't know," he replied; "dere is a black hair in my brush, and it is tissing and bowing to all de white ones." The perseverance of this child, making the one black hair kiss and bow to all the white ones, has never been forgotten. His habit has always been to persevere to the end.

When girls and boys are bursting out into youths and maidens, it often happens that habits are begun which rule them more or less all their lives. Parents should then be careful to see that these buds of future character are not likely to prove monstrosities; or worse, productive of thorns, always thrusting themselves against their neighbour.

The habit of ridicule in the young is a very common disease, and ought always to be discouraged. To see a young thing, just entering on the arena of life, begin instantly to laugh—perhaps jeer—at the company he or she finds there, is offensive to the last degree. And yet these young things have this obnoxious habit, which, if not laughable, is tiresome and irritating.

Who ever had a parcel of schoolboys or hobbledohys in the house who did not suffer from their inability to sit still? Every two minutes one or other would rush out of the room and bang the door after him, no two thinking that the same moment for leaving the room would do for both. Or if

books are given them by way of an attempt at having peace, one will beat the devil's tattoo with his foot, while the other drums the table with his fingers. But the restlessness of youth cures itself, and is not so bad to bear, if one was not sure that some of the boyish habits were continued from sheer want of control.

Girls are equally prone to be disagreeable, though perhaps in less noisy fashion. One has a habit of always picking at her face, another twiddles her curls, a third is always making faces—all these, not watched and corrected, grow into intolerable habits.

The habits of idleness grow like mushrooms; habits of dawdling—of beginning and never ending—are all most deteriorating.

One fast young gentleman boasts that it is his habit so to time his arrival as only just to catch a train. He is disgusted if he is a minute too soon, and is totally regardless of the fuss he puts his household into, lest he should be too late. The over-driving of his horses—the distracting of the railway porters—the detention of the train—and the irritation of the people in it, lest they should be late in meeting cross trains, count nothing with him. And all this worry and trouble simply because it is his habit just to catch a train!

There are some families who, inheriting noble and ancient names, have also bequeathed to them certain habits. "This is the habit of our house," they say, with courteous pride; and it often happens that the habit is one befitting their rank and noble blood. There are few who cannot call to mind these heirloom habits, which redound so much to the credit and the name of the doers of them. But should it be a habit repellant to society, society often revenges itself by making it recoil on the heads of those who will persist in following it. This may be exemplified by the arrogant and supercilious discourtesy which, under the habit of "speaking one's mind," leads many people to say not only ill-natured, but unwarrantable things, to a person's face. No good is done by this, but rather harm; and, above all things, it loosens for ever any bond of friendship that might have been between the parties before.

It is the habit of some husbands to be agreeable and pleasant in society, but overbearing and rude at home. It is the way of some wives to be amiable and lively abroad, but dull, listless, and slovenly at home. These habits should be amended as soon as possible. It is the habit of some families, not only never to forgive, but to boast that they do not do so. Oh, unhappy people! thrusting from your lips the sweetest draught that our beneficent God has given us—a draught the spring of which is from his side—a draught that gives a serenity and peace, which vouchsafe a little foretaste of heaven. Alas! alas! what a pitiable, mistaken habit is this!

Many people excuse themselves for doing or not doing certain things because it is their habit. This class is very numerous, and belongs to such inferior characters, that they are often found tripping. If an occasion present itself when the doing of the "habit" is inconvenient, straightway they ignore it altogether.

Again, some people will stick to their habit, right or wrong, convenient or inconvenient, and of course punish themselves by so doing. It not seldom

happens that they will obstinately persist in doing a deed that everything on earth—perhaps even in heaven—rises in phalanx after phalanx to thwart and prevent. Such people need to be reminded of a higher power than their own will. Almost invariably they are forsworn, and suffer bitterly from the fulfilment.

Then there are people who have ridiculous habits—most innocent and most laughable. Such was the case of a gentleman who went in our nursery by the name of Mr. Tiddydol. He gained this name because he invariably ended every sentence with the unmeaning and ridiculous word "Tiddydol." Even those who were accustomed to him could hardly help smiling—so incessant was his use of the word, so unconscious was Mr. Tiddydol of ever saying it. On one occasion—perhaps on many, but this one occurred before us all—he nearly got into a scrape. A clergyman from a distance having come to see my father, was brought in to luncheon, at which we were all seated, as well as our friend with the eccentric habit.

My father introduced the Rev. M. T. to him.

"How do you?—Tiddydol,"

"Sir!"

"Glad to make your acquaintance—Tiddydol."

"Sir-r!!" The Rev. M. T. looked so indignant as he uttered this, that Mr. Tiddydol was startled, but equally unconscious of the cause.

"I have heard of you, I assure you I have—Tiddydol." Meaning to be extremely civil.

"This is not to be borne!" exclaimed Mr. M. T., rising from his chair in anger.

My father only now perceived the reason of his anger; for he had been so accustomed to dear old Tiddydol, whose innocent mild face was expressive of the utmost bewilderment at the bad effect of his great civility, that he totally forgot the effect it might have on a stranger. He put a hand significantly on Mr. M. T.'s arm, to make him sit down again, while he murmured—

"A habit, only a habit; it means nothing."

"We all have habits," remarked my mother, to assist in the explanation.

"So we have, ma'am—Tiddydol. They tell me I have a droll habit—Tiddydol—but for the life of me I can't find it out—Tiddydol."

The Rev. M. T. stared in amazement; but Mr. Tiddydol appeared wholly unconscious that he was the cause of his wonder. Afterwards he told my father that Mr. Tiddydol ought to be shut up as a lunatic.

"Nay," answered my father, "'tis a harmless habit."

"By no means, sir; I was inclined to fell the man to the ground when I heard him calling me by so absurd a name."

"Could you not see by his countenance that he was incapable of wounding any person's feelings?"

"Not at all; to be called 'Tiddydol' by an utter stranger was sufficient to provoke any man. Where are his friends? Has he no one to tell him what a fool he is? Cannot you make him understand the annoyance of such a habit?"

My father told us afterwards that the irascible Mr. M. T. left the house still very indignant against Mr. "Tiddydol."

"Mr. M. T. little thinks," said my father, "that he has a habit much more disagreeable and lamentable in its effects. He has so barbarous and uncivilized a mode of clearing his throat when in the pulpit, besides being apparently the permanent possessor of a bad cold in the nose, that he is gradually thinning his congregation. I have heard it said that the more eloquent he is the worse is his habit, which is so disagreeable as to be almost nauseating."

Another instance of a similar habit occurred in a most courteous, urbane old Welsh clergyman.

"I hope I see you well, my dear madam—complete and do it," he would say, with his hat off, and a bow as low as his age and ponderosity would permit.

"Quite well, thank you. What bitter weather!"

"Very bitter, indeed—complete—more so than I ever felt,—and do it."

"How does Mrs. V. bear it?"

"Very badly—complete and do it."

"Tell her not to venture out until it is warmer."

"I will, my dear madam—complete,—she shall have your very kind message—and do it."

Some people get into the habit of so ruling their lives that they are quite put out, bodily and mentally, if there is the least failure in the fulfilment of this routine. These are slaves to their habits, and do not in the end derive as much comfort as they expect from them; because they are certain to jostle against some one else equally a slave to their habit, and one or other must give way.

It is a very agreeable thing to meet with a person, who says, with hearty self-satisfaction—"It is my habit to be punctual." You feel at once that you know the man; he is punctual to a proverb; and having no vexatious worry as to being late, his digestion is good, his heart cheery, his mind free to take in any idea, and he is always an agreeable and genial companion. So is the man who says—"Tis my habit never to owe a bill." Happy man! his pillow is always of down, his sleep sweet and refreshing, his thoughts of his neighbour large and kindly, his devotion to God pure, and always beginning with praise.

We have hitherto only spoken of individual habits. There are a large class of family customs that exercise a vast influence over the world. Children go forth from the parent nest—spreading the habits they have imbibed over every phase of society. These can be easily traced to their sources.

In the beneficent, courteous manners of a gracious, gentle, firmly-ruled house, may be seen the nearest approach to that intercourse which we are to enjoy for ever, with God for our father and friend. No hard word is heard therein; a grave look constitutes the sternest rebuke; a loving trust is as largely developed in the parents as the children. And if the latter—momentarily snared away after the impulse of youth—should be in desperate want of forgiveness and comfort—the children of this household turn to the kind

father, as the mourner turns to God. Never will he be stricken with heart-ache and remorse, lest an untimely severity has hardened, instead of mending, his returning prodigal. In his declining days he will see the sweet influences of forbearance and kindness, of which he sowed the seeds, spreading out into large fertile pastures, on which bloom the flowers that send their fragrance up into the heavens. Wherever his children go, they fertilize the circle around them with the perfume of gentleness and goodness. He dies, and goes to God, knowing that his name is loved and honoured to the latest moment.

How different is this household from that where harsh rules, unforgiving ways, distrust, and mean suspicion mark the habits of the ruler therein! The children who at the first opportunity flee from this house carry no good into the world with which to make them honoured and beloved. Early treated with suspicion, rarely trusted and harshly ruled, all the faculties and energies with which God so bountifully blesses them are turned from the glorious paths of honour, truth, and good sense, into the intricate labyrinths of subterfuge, deceit, and lying. Familiar with these from their childhood, how can they eradicate habits which have become as second nature? How can they do to others as they would to themselves, when it has been the habit of their family for each to shift for himself, and "God help the hindmost?" What do they understand of neighbourly intercourse, when their father has taught them that "every man's hand is against them," and none more so than his own? No, they go forth into the world ready to give blow for blow, to take all they can get, to laugh at those who lose, to trample on those who are down, to make a wilderness where should be a "garden of herbs." Thinking they are doing their duty by themselves, they fail in their duty to God and man, and more to themselves than either; and this not so much from any inherent wickedness in them, but because the habits of their family produced the different results.

In our neighbourhood dwelt two families in some respects exemplifying these two cases, though in neither was it extreme. Mrs. Lennox was an amiable, gentle, but not clever woman. She had been early left a widow, and had the sole control of two girls and a boy. Perhaps a little conscious of her own want of character, she did not rule her children by the strict laws of right and wrong, but only by the power of her affections. They were high-spirited and talented children, who could have argued their good, timid, little mother out of all reason had they so minded. But a flush on her pale cheek, a frightened look in her gentle eyes, was to them as powerful as the sternest rebuke.

Mr. Clarke, a robust, rough gentleman, who acted the character of farmer more than that of gentleman, boasted that he brought up his children on the rough and ready system. "A word and a blow" was his habit, and it was most effectual. His wife was one of those clever, pushing, undaunted women that contrive to get much more good out of the world than is their share, and are not at all scrupulous how they get it. She was ready with her word, perhaps with her blow. They also had two girls and a boy.

It happened that the eldest Miss Lennox and the youngest Miss Clarke

both fell in love, and the object of their passion was, in both instances, held in exactly the reverse estimation by their parents. Miss Lennox had been attracted by the showy, handsome exterior of a flirting young captain in the Hussars, of whom nothing worse could be said than that he was empty-headed, vain, and selfish. Miss Clarke's lover was an impudent, forward sort of flash gentleman, who was in the habit of talking of her as a "fine girl." To be sure, she had not had much experience in her own family as to what constitutes a real gentleman, and therefore she ought to have been pardoned mistaking this "snob" for one. In other respects he was not ineligible, having a good fortune and a nice house. But his manners, and speech, and habits were too unrefined for even the unrefined Clarkes, and consequently Miss Clarke was peremptorily ordered to forget him. Her father, it was believed, merely contented himself with consigning her eyes to destruction if she married such a vulgar snob; while her brother jeered at her, and her sister sneered. These were their habits, and the girl felt herself baited and scorned. It was at this moment that the influence of the mother could have righted matters. But it was the habit of the mother to be rumbustical and overbearing.

The idea of a daughter of hers not knowing a gentleman from a snob! A pretty thing indeed to make her mother-in-law to a snob! Where was her pride? No doubt his mother was some housemaid, else of whom could he have learnt his speech? God forgive her if she was in a passion, she was more than in a passion. She had almost a mind never to speak to *Jemima* again for thinking of such a thing. Where was her pride? Perhaps she was in haste to be married; a pretty thing, indeed! She could not wait until a gentleman addressed her! In short, she goaded the unfortunate *Jemima*, and while goading said so much that the girl knew to be false, that it was no wonder she considered the whole merely "one of mamma's passions,"—a habit she had of driving her family to execute her wishes by a storm in a teacup.

Gentle Mrs. Lennox pursued a different course. She made herself her daughter's trusted confidante. She entered into all her hopes and fears, conscious all the while that her child had given her true young heart to one utterly unworthy the gift. But she beguiled her by her sweet sympathy, her loving anxiety, and her fearful tremor lest he was not worthy of her darling *Jessie*.

She even made excuses, where *Jessie* had none to whisper to her heart; and by suffering, affection, and truest warmest interest, she made her daughter turn of her own accord from the vapid love of her lover to the soft, tender, warm heart of her mother.

Miss Clarke, of course, eloped. Her family said they would not forgive her, and they don't. She is, however, the centre of a circle no lady or gentleman would care to be in. She has become very large, and very red in the face. She and her husband do not care much for each other, yet, at the same time, no retribution or scandal has followed the elopement. Still is it not sufficient punishment to the lady to know that she has sunk very low in the ranks of the world? and when she sees the vulgar creatures

around her, she must long at times for the somewhat higher society she had in her first home. Few people like to sink, and a woman still less than a man. Probably she thinks with bitterness, that had they not jeered, laughed at, and bullied her, she would never have thrown herself so recklessly away on a "snob."

Upon the whole, little or nothing has been said in favour of habits. Perhaps this is because nearly all generous and fine actions proceed from impulse. Yet we have habits; and that is but a foolish, undecided character that has no idiosyncrasy of its own. It behoves us, then, as we perceive and comment upon the habits of our neighbours, and wonder to ourselves why they persist in doing this and that, to turn our eyes upon ourselves, and make our comments upon our own habits. That they may be those which, while they better ourselves, exact a certain homage, and have a visible influence over the circle in which we revolve, should be our care. In heaven there are angels who minister, angels who praise, angels who record. Each has that part to do which is their peculiar idiosyncrasy or habit. In this world we can do the same, and seek in charity, in forbearance, in fortitude, in religion a sphere in which to exercise our habits.

STRANGERS.

I DO not know your name, dear,
I do not know your rank,
And do not care for either;
But heartily I thank

The chance, or fate, that made you
Go wandering that way,
The chance, or fate, that led you
To cross my path that day.

For I was drifting, drifting
Adown a grassy slope,
A spell was laid upon me
With which I could not cope;

The air was faint with roses,
The sea lay like a mist,
The flowers beyond the sunlight,
Were waiting to be kissed.

The waterfall kept dropping,
"Drip, drip," for evermore;
The little pool beneath it
With diamonds ran o'er:

A word had just been spoken,
The answer yet remained,—
A step upon the greensward,
I momentarily refrained.

Two stranger eyes bent on me,
So grave, and pure, and sad,
Such eyes as those my brother,
Who was not, might have had.

They changed my coming sentence,
From plausible to true:
I might have wrecked two lives, dear,
If it had not been for you.



SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

XIV.

THE smile of God is a commonplace of the modern poetic vocabulary, and the laughter of him that sitteth in the heavens was a figure of speech not unknown to the singers of Palestine. Modern poetry makes the *angels* laugh, and some people talk very glibly about the incarnation of the divine Word or pattern of humanity; but of all that it implies, there are few that appear to have a glimpse. The solemn unhumorous Schiller could deliberately lay it down that the highest reach of human art is the *spiel-trieb*, or sport-impulse; and a distinguished modern writer has said that women, and feminine natures, cannot perfectly understand men and virile natures, because a man's humour is so often the deepest part of him. It is so, however, only when the humour or sportiveness is all-comprehensive, not partial or occasional only. Everybody has some capacity of humour, can see some joke, can laugh at some part of the grand spectacle. But rare as its twin-brother, the high imagination, is the interfusing sportiveness which penetrates religious faith itself, as we may discern it did in that astonishing northern mythology on which the Christian system so easily was grafted; the smiling ecstasy which "darts from heaven to earth," and takes in both sides of the firmament at once.* Yet without some share of this humour, it is impossible to deal with people who exhibit self-contented, comfortable meanness, except at the cost of exciting the mind to despise and hate them. Writers who have no broad humour invariably cause us to hate the mean people they paint. The satirist makes us hate both them and himself—himself as a mere Jack Ketch, his victim as "flagrant from the scourge" deserved; but the humourist, especially the caricaturist, reconciles us to human nature. The principle upon

* It is necessary to state that these rapid, though not ill-considered sentences, upon a profound yet not very difficult question, were in type before the appearance of the article on "Humour and Faith" in the *Spectator* of March 16th, 1867.

which he works is that of reaction, and his method is that of fluent exaggeration. As only good fellows or kind friends will stand teasing, so it is only where the goodness is greater than the badness, and is, by reaction, suggested by the caricature, that the humour in caricature, which is essentially teasing, becomes an effective instrument of description. The caricaturists have, as a matter of fact, been almost all men of large humanity, and true helpers of humanity into the bargain; so that if I should drop into caricature in sketching the people of whom it is now time to say something—I shall not be sorry for it, as if it were an error. It is an advantage in describing mean people and mean things.

There was deep and beautiful religious feeling, effectual apprehension of vital truth, and self-denying service among the rather numerous and very diverse members of the church there assembling; but outside and inside, I do verily believe, Zoar Chapel was one of the ugliest things heaven ever permitted to stand upright on the face of the solid, much-enduring earth. With a gloomy passion of hate I watched the building of the sacred edifice, and I am not sure that I was not asked to subscribe to its erection. I know that one day, at the corner of the street, I was accosted by two sickly-looking children, who, in a tone of melancholy confidence, asked me to subscribe to something or other, handing up as high as they could—that is, up to my waist—a greasy little ruled card, on which my eye caught the words "Building Fund." I looked down with horror upon the sallow little mannikin and minnikin, and—fled. If it was not Zoar Chapel that I was asked to subscribe to, what was it? I *know* those children belonged to Our Zion. I know they did. They didn't get a stiver out of *me*, and I experience a morbid joy in knowing that the Building Fund of Zoar Chapel is yet open; or, in other words, that there is a debt upon the revolting edifice. May it never be paid off! There the mortgagee transfer his lien upon the property to a haughty ritualist, who will come down upon Zoar with bricklayers and battering-rams, and lay siege unto it, and put the pew-opener's hassock to the edge of the sword, and take the city, and carry the hymn-books into captivity, so that there shall not be one stone left upon another!

Incoherent and unnecessarily harsh as these aspirations may appear to the reader, it is only because he has not seen Zoar Chapel; or, as the populace of Our Zion call it, Zoar Meeting-house. That, you know, they take to be primitive simplicity, or frank imitation of the early Christians. The building is, to speak the truth, *somewhat* larger than Lady Featherstonehaugh's reception-room; but so it ought to be, considering it is expected to hold a good many more people. Inside it has, of course, the requisite adornment of a gallery—Cherry called it a first-floor—and the people who "lived" there, for that was her phrase, she called first-floor lodgers. But I hope I am not bound to make oath that the gallery within was uglier than that portico on the outside upon which the architect prided himself so much as bearing the signature of genius. The portico was, I believe, the more hideous thing of the two. Under a blank entablature of concrete were four amorphous columns, standing in pairs, on a majestic flight of three steps—one pair on each side of the

doorway. Cherry always called these pillars "sticks of peppermint," and it was not by any means the worst of her little christenings, good girl. The doorway I think you can picture to yourself. There was not space to swing a cat in, I believe, but as (to quote Mr. Dick) nobody ever wanted to swing a cat there, that was of no consequence. I should say there was about room for three damp old women to stand and mumble at each other on a wet Sunday evening as they took their goloshes off and arranged their umbrellas. The real doors—folding panels covered with red baize and studded with brass nails—were to your right and left hand. The centre space, which confronted you as you entered, consisted of pannelling painted white, the uppermost foot or so of space being glazed from side to side, the glass dulled or "ground." In this portico it was that, as the congregation gathered or dispersed, brethren and sisters sometimes put to each other the momentous question, "How did you hear?"—not that there was supposed to be any deafness in such cases, but that these good people thought a great deal of frames and feelings. Cherry's friends took the sermon as they took the weather, or a doctor's prescription, without criticism or strong appreciation of any kind, and a good many of them dozed under it; while others furtively carried on their bashful sweethearting with their eyes under the very nose of the clergyman. I am sure you have yourself seen young girls' faces, and young men's faces too, turn suddenly red in church, but perhaps you have not looked about for the cause of the blushes, as I have. Why, only the Sunday before last, I saw a pretty creature in pale-blue silk, with one of the loveliest little noses God ever turned with his fingers to drive a man mad withal, I say I *saw* her turn red all down her very neck, as far as I could see it; and, by a tolerably complete and well-grounded induction, I satisfied myself that the cause of this young creature's sudden change of colour was the entrance of a not over-significant-looking youth—a swell, I should call him, if swells ever came to church—who had stepped into an opposite pew, discredibly late, and had just lifted his head, and looked round the place, oh, so innocently! after having stared for ten seconds at the maker's monogram at the bottom of his hat. This youth can easily be identified, if you doubt my word, for he has brown hair, and parts it down the middle. However, that is personal. Cherry always stood up for courting in church, and she never hesitated to cuddle Timothy there in a perfectly undisguised manner. "If people mustn't make love in church," said Cherry, "they'd better not go and get married there." "And if you said some people didn't get married there, but went to the registrar's, she would reply, "More shame for them! They might as well go to a railway-station to get married." For a long time Cherry took the registrar's to be a private institution; and confounded it with the kind of registry-office to which some ladies go for servants. When Tom Hearne and Sarah Best got married at the registrar's, and Sarah immediately afterwards told Cherry of the fact, Cherry started, as if a new idea had struck her.

"Why, I saw you courting myself!"

"Courting! yes, of course you did! You don't suppose I should go and get married without courting, do you?"

"But I thought," resumed Cherry, in a daze, "I thought when people got

married at the registrar's, they went and put their names down in a book, and paid eighteen pence, and waited till . . . till they got engaged."

For once, the laugh was at Cherry rather than with her, and the village did not fail to hear of her mistake. But she still maintained that to get married at the registrar's was discreditable—just like "going to the grocer's and having your ounce of tea put down in a book when you go on trust." But her notions of what a church would cover had no bounds: it was the universal sanctuary. Once, when Mr. and Mrs. Bayles and all the family, who had been slyly followed by their mastiff-dog, found him under the seat at the close of the service, she clapped—I was going to say her hands, but I ought to say her whole body, for joy. It is true she was displeased when the dog barked as he neared the porch in the crowd, while the organ was pouring out the parting music on the heads of the people, but she was angry with Horrocks the beadle, for rebuking the animal with his staff, and said, "Let him alone; it's the dog's ology!" The only pun Cherry ever made—to my knowledge.

It is a customary trick of small ridicule, with such as do not know any better (and they are the majority), to banter serious people as "bilious." There is but little foundation for the fancy on which this kind of banter is founded. The Wesleyans, as a body, are not of what is called the bilious, but of what is called the sanguine temperament; and, casting the eye over the faces and figures of the men and women in any casual congregation of dissenters, I am sure you will at once see that the people are of types as varied as the people at any theatre or lecture-hall in the world. Yet I have sometimes been inclined to give in to the fancy that there is a predominance of the bilious or bilious-lymphatic temperament among Calvinists of the Particular Baptist persuasion. I am nearly sure that in Zoar Chapel, among the church as distinguished from the congregation, you would find a very large proportion of men with dull grimy complexions, and a tendency to lank black hair. Do you know what I mean by a dull grimy complexion? I mean a complexion of which the basis is a floury-white, but which looks as if a charge of gunpowder had been sent through it, the granules being afterwards washed or strained out, and yet leaving behind them plain traces of their having been there. Such a complexion was that of Pastor Embler, of Zoar Chapel; he had strong, crisp, iron-grey hair, however, and his body, which was neither stout nor slender, was strongly-knit, with plenty of bone and sinew. He had pent-house brows, and the ordinary, I may say unvarying, expression of his countenance was that of a man who had been forming a very gloomy determination of some kind—he always suggested to me a man who has just heard that his son has committed forgery on his bankers, and is resolved, while concealing the crime, to cut the scapegrace off with a shilling. Mr. Embler always walked with a sort of stoop, forward rather than downward, of the whole body, and with the face of such a man as I have supposed walking to his lawyer's to have such a will prepared. His hat was low and wide of brim, his coat broad in the tails; and his whole appearance was that of a farmer, except that he wore Hessian boots, and that his trousers or breeches (I never knew which he used to wear, and I don't believe anybody else did) fitted close to his handsome thighs. There certainly *was* a harmony about

Mr. Embler's general appearance and get up—a kind of Particular Baptist harmony,—and even the Hessian boots seemed not incongruous; but it must not be supposed that his costume escaped criticism. A religious community who repudiated the application of any such word as reverend to their preacher, and simply called him pastor, naturally reserved to themselves the right to criticise either his doctrine, his breeches, or his manners—the last, however, would have been expressed at Zoar by the scriptural periphrasis, his “walk and conversation.” It was not concealed among the “brethren,” and it was openly asserted among the “sisters,” that Mr. Embler was proud—or, if that is too strong a word to be applied to any emotion of a man who believed in original sin—was *conscious* of his legs. Indeed Mr. Embler had his peculiarities, like other good men. The pride of life and the companion phrases seemed hard words to apply to such a queer figure as his, with his square coat-tails and his dingy-white neckcloth; but it had been whispered of him. You can scarcely think of him in connection with rose and myrtle: can you fancy it possible for him to sport with Amaryllis in the shade, or with the tangles of Neera's hair? Yet he had a certain fame, or repute, or character, which had well nigh cost him his pulpit and his place on one occasion. When Mr. Embler lost his first wife he was a grave, solid-looking man of nearly fifty. Having a gift of tears, he bewailed her in a manner which went to the hearts of his people, especially the women. And yet, six months after her death he married again—married his own servant-girl. Of course the new Mrs. Embler was a member of the church, but that was not even a palliation; it was not supposable that Embler could ever look at a woman who 'wasn't a member of *some* church—and the preference would naturally be given to Zoar, where he might have had his pick, at leisure. But not only was the time short—six months—the brethren and sisters felt there was something underhanded about the whole story. If Embler had chosen to address a lady in the open flock, everybody would have known of it, it would have been all fair and above board; but who could possibly tell what was going forward, if a man did his courting all in his own house, when nobody was there? This was far too easy-going a bit of business. And no hint of it had transpired, while the maiden was being wooed—brethren and sisters had gone to Embler's to tea, and had even stayed to supper, but they had never noticed anything particular “between” him and the girl; nor had he ever seemed to pay her any special attention at chapel. It is true, now the murder was out, a few friends recollected having seen Embler “look” in a curious way, and having heard Sarah “speak” with something more than a handmaiden's confidence in herself; but this, not being quite avowed, only made matters worse; and it was generally held that Embler's courtship and marriage savoured too much of “human craft.” It was not “the simplicity of the gospel;” and Foat, the toyshop-keeper and bill-di-counter, used stronger language than even “the cunning of the flesh.” Besides, poor Embler's tears for his first wife were still wet in people's memories, and the ladies of the little community naturally felt aggrieved, in the name and interest of the whole sex, that a man's affections should be “so slight a thing.” “It really seemed,” said Mrs. Wade, “as if there was no

security for anything;" Mrs. Roberts thought "the foundations of society were being undermined;" while Mrs. Jackson boxed the ears of her little girl who reminded the company that King David had several wives all at once.

"That was under the old dispensation," said Mrs. Wade, with a sigh, as if, orthodoxy notwithstanding, the old dispensation had been rather to blame for allowing so much freedom of action to the royal warrior and poet.

"The men are all alike," put in Mrs. Roberts; but added, observing some surprise, not to say alarm on the faces of Mrs. Wade and Mrs. Jackson, "till their hearts have been changed by grace."

The result was that Mr. Embler narrowly escaped deposition. There were several deacons' meetings held at the brethren's houses, which began with prayer, and ended with the singing of

"Come, thou fount of every blessing!"

and at last there was a special church meeting called, to hear an address upon the subject from Mr. Embler himself. This meeting was opened by the singing of the hymn—

"We are a garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made peculiar ground,
A little spot enclosed by grace,
Out of the world's wide wilderness;"

and I am bound to say Embler carried the day. The bone of contention—I mean the new Mrs. Embler—kept decently within doors, and her husband made a speech, beginning—

"Dearly beloved brethren and sisters of this favoured church; chosen and predestinated from before the foundation of the world; called to be saints; if I am not a pastor unto others, yet, doubtless, I am unto you, for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord."

There was and is no conscious insincerity among such people in their glib, customary use of such words as these. But they are so customary that they are habitually employed without any of that depth of feeling which might make it irreverent to quote them. During the delivery of this address, curiously compounded of general confessions and particular exculpations, Embler wept again upon so large a scale that the church relented, and resolved not to impeach him. Next Sunday, Mrs. Embler was spoken to and shaken hands with by the deacons' wives, in what to a more elegantly-motivated community would have appeared an ostentatious manner, and it all ended in the getting up of a testimonial to Embler. The testimonial consisted of a copy of Bagster's Comprehensive Bible, which certainly looked very handsome upon the red velvet pulpit-cushion with the tassels. And the very first time Embler preached out of it, he took for his text the words: "And gave gifts unto men;" neatly dividing his discourse into three heads—1, What gifts were received; 2, Who received them; and 3, For what end they were received. The singing-deacon responded to this delicate compliment by giving out the hymn—

"How beauteous are their feet
Who stand on Zion's hill,
Who bring salvation on their tongues,
And words of peace reveal!"

a hymn which is considered the proper thing in the Particular Baptist connection whenever any strictly pastoral occasion arises.

I was seldom able, myself, to sit out a service of Emble's, but I know his style very well. Once I dropped in and sat at the top of the gallery stairs, unseen and unseeing, though attentive, where his hard, monotonous voice could reach me, and from time to time I caught fragments of what was, I know, held to be a very precious word in season. Every ten minutes or less I heard the refrain—"And she bringeth her food from afar!" by which I knew that the preacher had chosen Proverbs xxxi. 4, for his text, and was "spiritualizing" it to his heart's content and the great comfort of his hearers.

The Zoar Chapel people were the especial hatred of Tomboy. She called them the Cumbersome Christians. She said their chapel smelt like a mousetrap, though, for my part, I should have said that on a hot Sunday evening it smelt more like sage and onions, and unwashed feet, mixed with coarse lavender water. As for the piety of the people, Cherry was prejudiced. She made the wretched Foat into a type, and excommunicated nearly the whole body in his name.

"Do you call *him* religious? Why, he's only been dipped in religion as a wick is in tallow. It sticks to him, but he don't know anything about it, no more than a white post knows what colour it's painted. You might paint it blue and it 'd be none the wiser."

But the singing was Cherry's pet aversion. Thomas Fuller says somewhere, quaintly enough, that he wondered God could patiently listen to so bad a singer as he was; and Cherry used to maintain that there wasn't an angel in heaven that wouldn't stop up his ears at the "hunked singing" at Zoar. I must confess that the musical standard at such tabernacles is not, or was not, very high. There is ever an undue proportion of bass voices in a Particular Baptist congregation, and yet you may have heard such a thing—I am sure I have—as an old woman giving forth the bass of a fugue in a quavering, though confident voice, without rebuke from any one. It is all considered "praising God." In these congregations, too, there are usually a good many irregular or guerilla practitioners. "You do not sing *regularly*," I once said to an elderly gentleman, whose voice I had heard by fits in the singing on Sunday mornings. "No—ahem!" he replied, clearing his pipes like Sir Roger de Coverley, "no—ahem! I just throw in a chord now and then to give weight—give weight—ahem!" Again, on another Sunday morning:—"You sang a good many grace-notes this morning, didn't you? It was quite like a new tune." "Yes, yes," says the solemn old muddler, "yes, yes—ahem! it puts life into it—a bit of a bravura—makes a variety—sort o' variety—ahem!" Now Cherry's notes were always as true as a bird's; and she had a genuine natural taste in art of all kinds, in spite of her uncouth ways, and of the uncouth things—tinselled "characters" and the like—which were once to be found in her box. So it is not surprising that she disliked the "hunked singing" at Zoar Chapel. She even went so far as to say she preferred the silence at the Quakers' meeting-house—from which, to tell the truth, she had been expelled for cracking nuts. "I was forced to do something, you

know," said she; "there they was all, sitting as still as a plantation. . . . Waiting for the spirit? It's a good deal more like waiting for a ghost!" But, in spite of this banter, Cherry had a weakness for Quakers; perhaps, because to so rough a creature as she was, there was a quiet fascination in their neat, noiseless ways. "I do like a soft, mild face like that," said she, referring to a Quaker lady, who had just passed by, "it quite cools you to look at it."

To return, however, to Mr. Embler. In spite of that declaration of his "to the church assembled in Zoar Chapel, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father from before the foundation of the world," that they were the seal of his apostleship—the poor man, after several years of preaching, fell into a melancholy about the "lack of seals" to his ministry; and eventually he resigned his pastorate. It is true that, if he had not done so, there was a gentle push ready prepared to make him; for some of the older and graver members of the church never quite forgave that second marriage within the six months, and watched for opportunities of tripping up poor Embler. In every church there is at least one troublesome member, and if the troublesome member happens to be a deacon, his power is great indeed. Now Cartwright *was* a deacon, and, as soon as ever it was rumoured about that poor Embler was thinking of resignation, he resolved to administer the necessary little push to complete the business. So, at the very next prayer meeting, when Embler was present, gloomy, silent, and much more ready to listen than to speak, old Cartwright took care that he should be called upon to "engage," and, in the course of his "prayer," managed to convey a pretty broad hint to the pastor. "O Lord," said Cartwright, adopting a fashion of speech which is not by any means uncommon at prayer meetings, "O Lord, thou hast been pleased, in wisdom, and yet, doubtless, in mercy, to lay thine afflicting hand upon thy servant, the pastor of this people. O Lord, thou knowest he has gone in and out amongst this people for many years; but it has not pleased thee to put the seal of thine electing love upon his ministry, upon his dividing of the word of truth. And now, O Lord, thou knowest that he is minded to depart from this place. 'Ye have compassed this mount long enough; turn ye northward.' O Lord, be his guide, and be his counsellor, and be his comfort, and his support, and his all, in that new sphere to which it shall please thee to call him."

Now, Mr. Embler had to sit still and hear all this, although he had by no means made up his mind to quit Zoar, and the topic had not come formally before any church meeting. Poor man, he could not very well "engage" after Cartwright, and contradict him. It is quite a common thing at prayer meetings to recite in a long preamble, which is to lay a logical foundation for something else, a great deal that the "Lord" is supposed to "know;" but it would have been an unheard-of thing for a man to get up and correct such recitals in a parody of the same *façon-de-parler*—"O Lord, thou knowest that thy servant, the pastor of this people, has not made up his mind yet." This would have been serving Cartwright as he deserved; but it would not have been tolerated in Zoar. And yet what could be more utterly irreverent in itself (I do not say in the consciousness of the people), more senseless, coldblooded wire-pulling than the whole business? There is true prayer offered up at

prayer-meetings formally convened; but there is also a great deal of speech-making, called prayer by courtesy only; and when it is made, as one must sometimes have heard it made, the vehicle of petty spite, or personal pride, or even a stroke of policy, it is entitled to none of the ordinary reticence of handling in regard to religious topics.* Serious rebuke never touches it—it can be reached, however, and is effectually reached, by honest, open ridicule. A great living essayist says that to love a man thoroughly, one ought to be able to laugh at him now and then. I do not wish you to love these people in any strong sense; but it is scarcely possible even to *like* them, without smiling at them. So poor Embley went his way into gloomy retirement; living upon his savings, and upon what he could earn by school-keeping. He was succeeded in Zoar pulpit by that flowery young sprig of high-Calvinism, the Reverend—for *he* had always affected that title, though he had to renounce it at Zoar, where they would stand no nonsense—the Reverend Daniel Morlock, who constantly embellished his discourses with scraps of Watts, Rippon, Hart, and Toplady, introducing them with a sort of apology—"as the sweet poet says;"—but he was at first voted "too flowery," and very nearly split his bark upon the rock-a-head of verse. Let us consent to admire the severity of taste which inevitably finds Rippon a "flowery" writer, and falls back contented upon the dry, flat prose of—Isaiah, the Canticles, and the Apocalypse.

XV.

Mr. Woods, possessing his soul in that sacred toleration of wrong in another which belongs only to the very best natures, had the moral and spiritual tact which made it comparatively easy for him to restore peace, though not harmony, between Fanny and Mr. Foat, on the morning when he met Cherry in the parlour behind the shop and was left in charge of the little girl. But the heart of the child was immedicably wounded—not only through the pain of her little body, but through the partial publicity of the pain; and to pacify, or silence, or in any way put down a nature like that of the toyshop keeper, is to chill it. He ceased to be cruel to Fanny; but he now let her go alone; there was a "distance" between him and his

* As there are, perhaps, a very few readers who will maintain, in spite of all the care taken in the text, that it is irreverent, I sacrifice something in point of *literary* effect for the sake of quoting the following passage from Dr. Lee's defence before the Presbytery the other day, which catches my eye as I am reading this in proof:—"He was quite as able to make extempore harangues as most of them, and almost to any extent, but he was apt to find himself—as he thought they would very often find that, instead of being praying in their extempore addresses to God, they were only preaching to the people—he used to catch himself in that, and to find that, whoever was praying, he was under temptation not to be praying. The using of extempore prayer was the easiest thing in the world—any man but a fool could do it in a certain way. But the extempore prayer of other people no more satisfied him than his own did." To this I will add that I know (more or less) a man who, when a mere boy, was much plagued to devote himself to the ministry, and who, in a sort of private ordaining which he received from a venerable minister, now dead, was told that he must try and test his gift at *prayer-meetings*. And nobody seemed to think this funny.

daughter which bid fair to last for their lives. Only those who have forgotten their own childhood will find any difficulty in understanding that Fanny, after one or two attempts to be as usual, gave up taking her father's hand as they walked to chapel on Sunday mornings; and that she felt as if something was wrong when her clothes brushed his in the pew as they sat. She had not Cherry's healthy pulse, healthy objectivity of mind, healthy power of forgetting—she was a tender, thoughtful creature, with a slender oval face, soft black eyes, wide-open nostrils, and a chin that shaded off into gentle nothing. Her prayers began to trouble her. She had not been taught to use the Lord's Prayer; but she knew forgiveness of injuries was a duty, and that she was to honour her parents. It would be possible for me to slip out of a difficulty here by some pretty periphrases with little or no meaning; but as I think deceiving myself is as bad as deceiving other people, I shall tell the plain truth—Fanny had ceased to honour her father, and she did *not* forgive him for what she felt to be a cruel injustice. There was a sharp pain at her heart which would not go away. I have read that the Austrians used to torture the Italians, and the Russians the Poles, by running threads through their heels so that the wretched prisoners could not even *hope* to escape. The little girl felt no resentment; but it was as if some such thread had been run through her heart on the morning when Cherry rushed into the parlour to her rescue. A shameful breach of the great principle of non-intervention on Cherry's part.

The indifference of Mr. Foat went farther than would be supposed possible. He took good care that his little daughter never went to church—that was indispensable care for her "immortal soul;" but he did not interfere with the shy, though growing friendship, which Fanny struck up with Tomboy, nor with her going to the Acacias from time to time with her. This was every way good for Fanny—she improved in health; she acquired bolder and more natural ways of looking at common things; she ceased to feel naughty if when she heard the chimes play on Sunday she was pleased *only* because the music was pretty; and she began to cling, morally, to the skirts of Tomboy, in a very affecting way. It was better that the little casuistic battles of conscience should be got through during the half-unconscious period of childhood, than that they should be fought in fiercer form when she could think more closely. Cherry was rather puzzled with her, and greatly abashed at the child's superior knowledge of the Bible.

"Miss White," said she, one day, in Cherry's room, while the latter was doing up her hair, "I've been staring at you all this while; and I think if you had wings you'd be something like an angel to look at."

"A pretty figure I should be with wings growing out of my shoulder-blades! I'd rather carry a pair of milking-pails, my dear. I don't feel the least bit of an angel."

"Then what will you do when you get to heaven?"

"I never thought of it, Fanny. I suppose I shall be altered in some way. When I was your age, I used to wish to go to heaven, because I felt sure they'd let me bowl a hoop all day long, and . . . have slides."

"I never thought of heaven like that. Isn't it . . . wicked?"

"Oh dear, I hope not," said Cherry, shaking her head; "but perhaps it is. Don't you ever feel wicked?"

"I feel different at different times. When the bells ring in the day-time, I like it, and sometimes they say things; but when they ring at night, they frighten me—they seem dreadful. I can't sleep in bed, and I used always to come down in my nightshirt, but father——"

"Nonsense, Fanny," interrupted Cherry, seeing the child's confusion, "as the fool thinks, so the bell clinks."

"Oh, Miss White! *don't* be angry with me; but it's very wicked to say fool—you'll be burnt for ever!"

Cherry burst out laughing, and turned short round. "That's what Mr. Embler says of a Sunday morning, is it?"

"It's in the Bible," said Fanny, finding "the place" at once: finding Matthew v. 22, I mean. Cherry was rather thrown back.

"There's some mistake," at last she said, decisively. "I don't believe it; it's nonsense; and there can't be nonsense in the Bible. I'll ask Mr. Woods. He knows Hebrew."

"I've read in Josephus, Miss White, have you?"

"N-n-o, not yet," said Cherry, gazing down upon the little mite with awe.

"Do you know the great big tank upon Mr. Blinkerton's garden wall, Miss White?"

"Yes."

"Do you think that's anything like the chamber that was built on the wall for the prophet, where they put the stool and the candlestick for him? Look, here it is!"

Again the little mite found "the place," and she and her friend read over together that beautiful idyll.

"And he said unto his father, 'My head! my head!' And he said to a lad, 'Carry him to his mother.'" Oh, you can't think how I remember that when my head aches, Miss White!"

"Bless the dear thing!" cried Cherry, taking her up on her knee, "I never had a headache in all my life—except when I pitched on my forehead at leap-frog, when 'Melia Luckin made a bad back for me. . . . Ah!"—with a sigh—"that's a good while ago now."

Let us leave this happy pair, embracing; the black hair mingling with the bright brown; the strong, almost ruddy, oval face pressed down upon the delicate white face of the younger girl. It was a very homely scene; but pretty. You have a double view of the dark child, and the fair child-woman; one in the glass, and one out of it, only the chrysanthemums in the tumbler prevent your seeing in the reflected image how carefully and tastefully Miss White has done up her back hair.

It is late in the year, and the winter will soon be here. Cherry and Mr. Woods have come no closer; as far as common eyes can judge, there is no indication that they will ever do so. But Timothy, having taken a fervent fancy to him, Timothy's mother accompanies him now and then, on rare occasions, to Mr. Woods's preaching-station. Her singing is certainly a great improvement to the service; and, perhaps, that is not all.

Indeed, a change was making itself apparent in Mr. Woods. Of love in any sense which will readily be caught I do not now speak: he was seven or eight years older than Cherry: almost ever since he had known her mother and her she had appeared something like a wild animal without a soul: her mother was constantly lamenting the hardness of her heart and her unregenerate condition. It is true that of late a loud murmur had been heard in Zoar that Cherry's mother had some hope that she was "under convictions," and Mr. Woods had been told of it by Mrs. White. But he only smiled; at all events the process, if it ever began, stopped short. The "convictions" never deepened, and of course the next stage of what our friends at Zoar believed to be the only possible "saving" movement of spiritual life was never entered upon—so far as outsiders could tell. This young person was more like a woman, less like a romp, kinder to the infirmities of others, infinitely, inscrutably prettier—and that was all. But there was no trace of a "saving change." Woods began, first, to be puzzled, and then to fancy he saw a light upon the puzzle. Against his will—no, without his knowledge—a new lore came to him unsought. One Saturday night he was up late, watching the last hour, and speaking the last comfort, in the chamber of a thankless, crabbed old crone, whose soul had been so cramped by the chills of its cabin that it would scarcely stretch out a half-quarrelsome hand to take the cup of kind words offered to it. He was sad, but he felt a divine breath in the place, and a divine fire in the pulse which took his weary body homeward. The next evening he was at his post in the preaching-station. Before him was this strange young creature; as wild and as fresh as a mountain-birch with the sweet wind in its boughs. He heard her voice; he could not help seeing the bold open goodness of her face: her crisp, free hair made jewels in the light where it fell. For any trace of struggle or pain upon her countenance, she might have come straight out of Eden, yes, with the shadow of its first roses printed on her cheeks—I wish the prettier word, *joues*, were English and not French—and the freshness of the freshest of the four rivers scarcely dried upon her. And now, again, he felt a divine breath passed over his brow. Yesternight in the chamber of death it was a wind out of the sunset. To day it was a wind out of the morning that he felt upon his face; but both were from heaven, each had overswept the same unfathomable sea. His soul stood poised at the meeting of the currents; and a new life passed into it.

Again, I say I know not how to speak here of what the world calls love; but the new life sent charges of beautiful passion through all this young preacher said and did. His eye was not the same, his step was not the same, his voice was not the same: his little discourses were as the speech of a man who had seen Wordsworth's "ten thousand daffodils," and held the vision beneath his "inward eye." But I have no space, in these pages, for criticism of the life of any of these good folks: and must leave much unsaid, for another place. Tieck has been held at fault in saying that it was the love of a little girl, who was scarcely a woman when she died, that impregnated the nature of Novalis; but he who has most studied the mysterious subject of spiritual impregnation will not be too confident a critic of such matters.

Time passed. Very soon there were no chrysanthemums for the little glass in Cherry's room. Then came the first snowfall, and then steady frost. On the margin of the uttermost village lay a pond—what village was ever without one? In summer I have seen it dry; once, I remember, with a most impudent-looking bullfinch perking himself on a reedy mound in the midst. But now that the swollen lake had been filled by the latter rains, the frost came down upon it suddenly in the moon-lighted chills, and breathed upon it, so that the fluent water became a floor of shining iron for him to tread upon. On one side the frozen pond was deeply shadowed over by palings, shredded trees, and hedgerows, and two or three half-cut hayricks that bordered the farmyard whose live stock resorted to it for drink, when it was filled and unfrozen. On the other side it lay open to a meadow. Beyond was the rumpled, straggling skirt of the outer village. Close by was the pretty church, of which I am sorry to have had no room to say anything serious.

That there was much sliding, along with a very little skating, on this pond will be guessed. In the day time the scene was simply a ragged turn-out of boys and girls, with no more attractiveness in it than was necessarily associated with the activity of so much young life. I frankly confess I cannot, myself, look with overmastering pleasure upon a confused helter-skelter race in which I chiefly see bad trousers—mostly too short, bad boots, bad caps, and wild incongruous worsted comforters. But at night you saw only the life of the little spectacle; and the laughter came out pleasantly from the moonlit crowd.

After a long period of self-restraint, it came into Cherry's head that she had been a woman too long. She would "break out," as they say at the penitentiaries. Fanny happened to be staying with her at her mother's house that evening, but Mrs. White was out. The church clock struck seven. The moon was up. It was clear dry frost.

"Fanny!" exclaimed Cherry, giving her a kindly shake at both shoulders and speaking right into her face, in a deep whisper, "Fanny!"

"Oh don't, dear, you shake so! What is it?"

"Fanny!" shaking her again, and then snatching her right up off the floor—"let's go and have a slide!"



RUBENS IN PARIS.

IT was in the year 1620 that Rubens received an invitation from Marie de Medici to repair to Paris and receive from her the commission for a series of pictures illustrative of her life. He had now been ten years married and settled in Antwerp, and was the father of two sons—Albert, a little lad of six, for whom the Archduke had done Peter Paul the honour to stand sponsor at baptism, and Nicholas, a baby of two years.

The court of France, under the weak young King Louis XIII., his beautiful, wilful young wife, Anne of Austria, and his meddlesome mother, Marie de Medici (just recalled from her banishment to Blois), was undergoing a

second renaissance, in which art took the place of literature. A taste for china, tapestry, and painting had arisen in France, and disputed successfully the palm of popularity with the grammatical and historical discussions which the noble précieuses carried on in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, one of the great family mansions withdrawing within their courtyards off the narrow, noisy streets. There the précieuses bred the jonquills, the lilacs, and roses of their gardens as natural antidotes against the horribly "sharp" smell of the black mud of Paris.

But art was not all-powerful to refine and raise the great world above its love of riot and debauchery, though it did something to soften and sweeten manners. It is one merit in that "weary" (that is wearying) woman, Marie de Medici, that she had the taste and the craving for art possessed by her ancestors from Lorenzo the Magnificent downwards. It is said that she herself drew with some skill, and that she asked and received a few lessons from Rubens. If so, the proceeding may be ranked among her vain affectations.

There does not seem to survive any record of the painter's journey to Paris, and his reception there. Probably, as his time was now precious, he went there with all possible despatch; certainly he was welcomed by the queen-mother and the court with all respect and distinction.

As for Rubens' impression of his heroine, he had that half-chivalrous, half-sensuous appreciation of royalty, which, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. He saw in the middle-aged, restless, conceited woman, not only the queen, who was lavish, gracious, and friendly in her favours to him as a man and an artist, but the representative of the friends of Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Bernard Palissy, carrying in her veins the very blood of the Medici—blood blue even to blackness. And if Marie in her person and story fell short of those showy attributes and picturesque effects so dear to Peter Paul, there were other figures at the French court which must have kindled and fed the imagination of the painter. Not the unkingly figure of the poor young king, but imposing, living shapes;—the mighty cardinal, then securing a seat at the council-board, and carrying in his bearing a prophecy of the only man of the day with power and will to rule France, and break the yoke of the nobles; young Anne of Austria, beautiful and passionate, with a proud, dishonoured life before her; "the little madame," Henrietta Maria, in her fifteenth year, one of the best court ballet dancers and romance singers; together with Condé, Guise, Montmorency, Bassompierre, Cinque-Mars.

Rubens designed twenty-one pictures from the life of Marie. He did not execute them at Paris, but got leave to carry the work home to Antwerp, where he employed on it his staff of assistants, only with his own hands touching up the principal parts. He returned to Paris, however, to take the portraits of the chief historical personages, and did not finish the composition till several years afterwards. But Rubens was the first to complain of this delay, which was not to be attributed to any tardiness on his part—a failing very foreign to his character—but to the preoccupation of the court, which was at last engrossed with newer attractions in the preparations for the marriage of Henrietta Maria and Charles of England.

In these pictures, which are among the greatest of Peter Paul's allegories and the boast of the Louvre, he proceeded with grand power and ease, and they bear all the exuberance and glow of his style. But the dislike to care and pains had now also become inveterate. He no longer aimed at that simplicity and correctness of keeping which he had given to the cartoons for the Genoese weavers. Jupiter, Hymen, Mars, and Minerva, were now muddled in admired disorder with priests, altars, and crucifixes, naked heathen deities, with gorgeously-attired queens and princes, and court suites of the time of Louis XIII. To atone for the sketchiness, the crowding, and the infallible cloyiness of such loose and hasty treatment, Peter Paul now resorted to the mischievous aids of his last decade. The pictures of this period are characterized by the exaggerated, almost brutal vigour, the glare rather than glow of colour, and the revelling in Corinthian wantonness of splendour in architecture, upholstery, and wearing apparel which the man himself liked so well, and which was exceedingly palatable to Marie and the French court.

Still, with all their faults, Peter Paul made twenty-one great pictures, triumphing over a Court Journal order of subject in a manner no man on earth could have done save himself. For the benefit of the uninitiated who may not have seen them or copies from them, and who may stumble on the last in some country mansion, we give a list of the series, though it is possible that recognizing the works, they may still have their sense of propriety a little shocked, and have some of the feeling of the little girl who once encountered the set, and racked her bemused brain to comprehend why a king and queen of France should be attended in every phase of their existence by what actually looked to her horrid men bathing. The following is the list:—

1. The Destiny of Marie.
2. The Birth of the Queen.
3. The Education of the Queen.
4. Henry receiving the Queen's Portrait.
5. The Marriage of the Queen.
6. The Debarkation.
7. The Marriage of Henry and the Queen.
8. The Birth of Louis XIII.
9. Departure of Henry for wars in Germany.
10. The Coronation of the Queen.
11. The Apotheosis or Translation of Henry.
12. The Government of the Queen.
13. The Journey of the Queen to the Bridge of Cé.
14. The Exchange of the two young Queens: Anne of Austria to be the bride of Louis XIII., Elizabeth of Bourbon to be the bride of Philip IV. of Spain.
15. The Happiness and Prosperity of the Regency.
16. The Majority of Louis XIII.
17. The Flight of the Queen to Blois.
18. The Queen deciding in favour of Peace.
19. Peace concluded.

20. Peace ratified in Heaven.

21. Time disclosing Truth (the most necessary picture of all, under the circumstances).

In addition to these, Rubens, during his last visit to Paris, painted Marie as Pallas, a travestie which must have tried the loyalty and gallantry of the courtly painter; Marie's father and mother, the Grand-duke and Grand-duchess of Tuscany (the latter Jane of Austria, daughter of Ferdinand I.); and a likeness of himself for her cabinet. He saw his works placed in the new gallery of the Luxembourg, and was frequently visited by the queen-mother and the court while he superintended the hanging of the pictures. When the achievement was completed, Peter Paul conducted the queen, in a kind of artistic triumph, through the gallery, and afforded her an explanation of the allegories (very much wanted to this day), receiving from the royal heroine, in full token of her approval, what she had always been only too ready to bestow—splendid presents.

The busy preparations for the marriage of the youngest daughter of France, whom Peter Paul did not paint at this time, were drawing to a conclusion. Amongst other agents from England, besides the chief negotiator, Lord Kensington, was Buckingham, the bosom friend of Charles. He was one of the haughtiest and most spoilt of royal favourites, determined to go even beyond his master in his insolent admiration of Anne of Austria, and in the luxurious tastes which were to make Buckingham House superior even to Whitehall.¹

A rage for collections of pictures and articles of vertu had just arisen in England. It was led by Thomas, Earl of Arundel, who, after receiving from King James a grant for the forfeited collection of Lord Somerset, had become so mad on such treasures, that he even employed agents all over Europe to acquire them. The rich earl gave large sums of money, and a roving commission to these agents to pick up pictures by Titian, drawings by Leonardo, and pieces of antique marble. In 1627 William Petty brought to England the famous spoil of the Greek temples. But the art-crazed earl was then dead, and his hobbies had fallen into neglect, at a time when England had more to think of. So the marbles were left to damp and destruction in private grounds, from which they were rescued by John Evelyn, and through his intervention presented to the University of Oxford.

But Buckingham was resolved to checkmate Arundel. He got himself introduced to Rubens in Paris, sat to him for his portrait, and having made inquiries as to the unique collection of the princely painter, he offered the owner at one bid a hundred thousand florins, or ten thousand pounds, to have it from him intact.

The sacrifice was not made without costing Rubens a struggle. His pictures gathered by himself from far and near, cherished as the apple of his eye, and regarded as the glory of his house, were actually a part of himself. But the florid-complexioned, bushy-bearded, dashing artist was eminently sensible, and he was already the father of two boys. His collection had only cost him one thousand pounds, and might be replaced. He would make it a stipulation that he should take casts from the statues.

So at one swoop away went his nineteen Titians, his twenty-one Bassanos, his thirteen Veroneses, his eight Palmas, his seventeen Tintoretos, his three Leonardos, his three Raffaelles, and his own thirteen choicest works, together with twelve boxes of agates chased in gold—all antiques, and carvings, in ivory and alabaster.

Well-paid as he thought himself, Rubens must have looked ruefully on at their departure, and he would have been more rueful still had he foreknown how soon the civil war in England, sending the wind among his treasures, would blow them here and there, the greater part into the possession of the Archduke Leopold, then building a gallery at Prague. But Peter Paul was never the man to cry over spilt milk, and so, being a man who could not live without gems of art, any more than a student could live without books, he set about forming a new collection. In place of hoarding the whole price of the old collection, and the large income derived from his profession, he went into the matter with such good will combined with such discretion, that in ten or twelve years the second collection surpassed the first.

Not more than a year after Rubens' second visit to Paris, when he was in his fiftieth year, one of the heavy blows of his life came upon him. His wife, Isabella Brant, died in her prime, while Rubens' boys and hers were only twelve and seven years of age. Rubens regarded her loss as a heavy affliction, and not only buried her body magnificently, in the same tomb with his mother and his brother Philip, in the church of the Abbey of St. Michael, but he presented a memorial of her, with the inscription,—“To the Virgin Mother, this picture, painted by himself with pious affection at the sepulchre common to the best of mothers, and to Isabella Brant, his wife, P. P. Rubens dedicated as a memorial on Michaelmas day, 1626.” His reflection on her in one of his letters, is on one prized beyond measure; because of her loss “I have lost an excellent companion; one might cherish her memory; she had none of the defects of her sex.”

The loneliness of his widowhood, after seventeen years spent in happy wedlock, so oppressed Rubens, that he determined to put aside for a time his manifold engagements as an artist, and the master of a school of painting, and quit Antwerp, going on his travels once more to divert his grief. He did not seek to nourish it, or to add to it all the penitence of a warm, tender heart, for real and fancied injuries done to its object while yet living. He had lived to find that life had visits enough from grief without wooing it to lengthen its stay. Perhaps, in the matchless outward prosperity of his life there had grown up a certain impatience and rebellion against these inward wringings of the heart, with their heavy yoke, contrasting so bitterly with the worldly success.

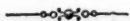
It was to the Lowlands of Holland that the painter betook himself. There among grazing cattle, gliding boats, wooden summer-houses, and the great marts of commerce, Peter Paul, languid at first, but with a kindly purpose, of visiting his old Dutch comrade at Rome, Cornelius Pœlenberg, found in some degree the relief he sought, and obtained more honour than he had expected. He made a royal progress of it, indeed, surpassing that which Albrecht Durer had accomplished a century before. He visited every Dutch artist

of eminence, going as far as the Hague before he had done; and he won golden opinions, from high and low, in return for his liberality and affability. But better than golden opinions was the cordial friendship he entered into at Utrecht with Gerard Houthorst.

Gerard, whom the Italians named, as they had named Correggio, "*Della Notte*," from his power over torch-light, and who, in illustration of his feats, sold to Rubens his picture of Diogenes with the lantern in search of an honest man, adding the delicate compliment of putting in himself as the cynic, and his friend as the honest man;—Gerard, like Rubens, was rich in royal patrons, some of them, it is true, poor enough—the house of Orange, and the Queen of Bohemia and her eleven children. The last, to whom he taught drawing, would have been better and happier artists, scholars, and soldiers, than they were princes and princesses. Among these was Prince Rupert, who was not only a hot and doughty Cavalier General, but who gave so great an impetus to the invention of mezzotinto, that he was long regarded as the inventor.

At the time of the Dutch tour Rembrandt must have been a lad of eighteen, and he was settled, and of some note, as a painter in Amsterdam, as early as his twenty-second year. However, there is no evidence of the great painter of shade,—whose life, after the first few years of manhood, was that of a struggling bankrupt,—encountering, even casually, the great painter of light, who was the friend and ambassador of kings.

The Low Countries were then just recovering from their war of independence, and with their rich, sluggish, drowsy beauty, the golden lights shooting through gray mists over broad plats waving with green meadow grass, the wealthy, luxurious, trading towns, and the white sails floating on still canals, elements which he knew so well, must have spoken with the charm of a mother tongue to the great painter. They roused his national pride, too, and awoke his patriotic regard and apprehension of danger for Flanders, which was now threatened with the new disaster of being made the battle-field for hostile armies gathering on all sides.



A GERMAN UNIVERSITY TOWN.

BY AN IDLE TRAVELLER.

SOON after my arrival in Heidelberg, I walked with Mrs. S. to the cemetery, one of the loveliest spots I ever beheld. It lies on a hill to the south-west of the city, in fact, one of the first slopes of the Black Forest range, looking north to the Neckar, west to the Rhine, and south, far away almost to Switzerland. All the roadsides leading to it (and those stretching in every direction over the plain) were lined with apple, pear, plum, and cherry-trees in full bloom, and the whole country looked like a garden; whilst the long, awkward waggons, drawn, not by horses or oxen, but by patient, much-enduring cows, as is the barbarous custom in South Germany,

gave a thoroughly foreign aspect to the scene. As we approached the cemetery we became aware of a long funeral procession winding up the hill, and we stood aside at the gate to let it enter. A hearse almost buried in wreaths led the way, followed by a number of mourning-coaches, containing twenty or thirty young men, each with a white scarf on his arm.

"It must be a young girl's funeral," said I, to my companion.

"Oh, dear, no!" replied she, "they would never have all this pomp and ceremony for any *girl*, nor even for a married woman. You don't yet appreciate the position of woman in Germany; she is decidedly the inferior animal, even in her own estimation."

I entered a private protest against this sweeping denunciation (a protest which I found it necessary afterwards to retract, so far as *South* Germany is concerned), and we followed the *cortège* into the cemetery. After wandering for some distance along the winding walks, we came suddenly on the spot where the funeral was taking place, so we stood behind a hedge of lilacs, whence we could hear and see everything without being seen, and listened to the service. The officiating minister, one of the "town preachers," was just beginning his discourse as we took our station. He was a large man, with a very broad Heidelberg accent, but not devoid of eloquence, though his sermon had the *unreal* tone which strikes one so painfully in most German preachers. The funeral *was* that of a young girl, just eighteen, the only child of a rich widow, and "verlobt;" her wedding day was fixed for the next month, and her "Bräutigam" was there as chief mourner; a touching story, but marred in the relating by the stress laid on the fact that the dead maiden had had "a dowry of twelve thousand guldens!" equal to £1000.

"Ah!" remarked Bessie, in her quiet way, "then this is the funeral of the twelve thousand guldens!"

The young lady had been a Protestant, and it was the Protestant service we saw and heard; but I believe there is little difference, except in the music. Protestants and Catholics share without distinction this sweet resting-place, and the little chapel (the only neglected-looking part of the cemetery) is fitted up so as to serve, if required, for the worship of either. The discourse ended, a hymn was sung, a prayer offered up, and then the coffin was lowered to solemn music, after which each of the mourners stepped forward in turn and threw a spadeful of earth into the grave. They then left the spot, and we continued our walk in a different direction. A dozen years ago few untravelling English would have imagined at first sight of the Heidelberg cemetery that it was dedicated, not to the recreation of the living, but to the repose of the dead; of late, however, we see near all our large towns humble imitations of the German "Gottes-acker," and I know at least *one* which will bear comparison, in all but extent, even with this, beautiful as it is. Yet no! for where, in England, can we have at once the foliage of the North and the flowers of the South, the verdure of our own land, with the sky of Italy? And where, in England, can we gaze on such a landscape as lies spread in apparently boundless magnificence before us, as we sit on the grass, and listen to the nightingale's song, borne on the evening air, heavy with the mingled odours of rose, honeysuckle, lilac, and syringa? The soil and

climate of Heidelberg are peculiarly congenial to flowering shrubs,—the lovely white acacia has sown itself all over the woods,—lilac bushes clothe the most inaccessible rocks as thickly as briars and honeysuckle in England, and roses seem to be planted in every available corner.

I have already mentioned the churchyard of St. Peter's Church, where lilacs, laburnums, and guelder-roses have run wild as in a neglected garden. I believe the church has been undergoing repairs for some fabulous period, and it is expected to remain in the hands of the restorers for at least twenty years more. As only one half of the population of Heidelberg thinks it necessary to attend divine service, the inconvenience of this state of things is scarcely felt by the natives; but when an inquisitive stranger, like myself, wishes to see the tomb of Olympia Morata, it is certainly a "pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." First you have (at least *we* had) to open the gate with a pair of scissors,—an operation which might be vulgarly described in a police-court as "picking the lock;"—next you make your way, at the imminent risk of a sprained ankle, over stones, bricks, and boards lying piled together at every conceivable angle, and adjusted with the utmost nicety so as to twist round the moment you set your foot on them; and, lastly, you find the church occupied by workmen (who eye you suspiciously, and can give you no information), the monumental tablets half obliterated, and many of them inaccessible. No doubt the "orthodox British tourist" knows exactly where to look for the one object of interest in the Petri-kirche; but perhaps some one as ignorant as myself may be glad to hear that the tablet commemorating the gifts and graces and early death of Olympia Morata is affixed to the right-hand wall of the northern portico, where we found it, quite by accident, just as we had given up the quest in despair. The churches of Heidelberg are all remarkably ugly (it might be an interesting speculation how far this fact operates in confining the attendance in them to the weaker and less cultivated sex); I suppose they, as well as the greater part of the town, were rebuilt early in the eighteenth century, after that general destruction by the French army, from which one house only escaped, viz., that most picturesque building known as "Zum Ritter." In one of these churches is to be seen the singular spectacle of Catholic and Protestant services alternately held in the same sacred edifice.

I went to church to hear Schenkel conduct the "University Service" on the following day, with visions of St. Mary's, Oxford, in my mind; Dons in their robes filling half the aisles, and undergraduates in the gallery. But "they manage these things" differently in Germany. The congregation was composed of ladies, with one solitary gentleman (I think he was an Englishman), looking exceeding forlorn in the midst of them. I glanced at the gallery, and saw about a dozen men (not gentlemen) in the front row, with a background of bonnets, and I whispered to Mrs. S.—

"Where are the students?"

"Oh, they don't come to church," replied she; "it is not the fashion."

"But are they not obliged to come?"

"Oh dear, no! they do as they please here."

"Then where are the Dons?"

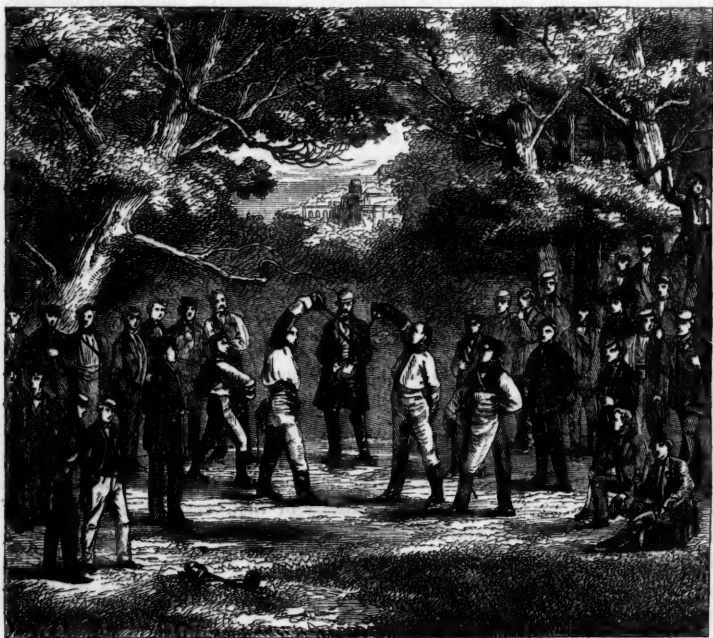
"If *any* attend, you will see them in that long pew under the north windows;" and accordingly, a few gentlemen *did* drop in by degrees, and take their seats there, but by no means in robes, nor even in gowns. The German "Evangelical" service consists, as everybody knows, of two long hymns, and one *very* long sermon; with a short prayer, and *no* Scripture, except the text. The collect, epistle, and gospel, which one finds in Lutheran churches in Prussia, are dropped here, as well as the long extempore prayer which the Prussian ministers usually give in almost the same words, Sunday after Sunday. The music is good, and rather less funereal in character than at Berlin, and the hymns are not *quite* so long, nine verses being considered enough for the two, so that the service altogether occupies less time. But I have to speak of the sermon, and I am bound to say that, in spite of the prejudice I had conceived against the preacher, I was fascinated, riveted, stirred to the very depths of my soul by his eloquence. Once in the pulpit, he seemed to throw off all that unpleasant self-consciousness which generally marred the effect of his countenance and manner: his eyes opened wide and darkened with intense feeling, his voice lost its nasal twang, and thrilled with earnestness as he appealed to his hearers to mark the signs of the times, and be found "fighting on the good side, with the weapons of the Christian warfare." And it was not merely an eloquent sermon, it was sound, direct, and *practical*; every word *told*, as I had not previously thought it possible for German words to tell, and the forty or fifty minutes did not seem to me more than twenty. Of heterodoxy, even of latitudinarianism, there was not a trace in the whole sermon; the most rigidly Evangelical critic would not have changed a single phrase; yet, strange inconsistency of the mind of man! I have heard a student who attended his lectures quote sentences from them which would *almost* have astonished Theodore Parker.

The vicinity of the students was a never-failing source of interest and amusement to me; the curious dissimilarity of their customs from those of our *own* universities was continually presenting itself in some new and striking light. Their absolute freedom and independence of all academical rules; and, on the other hand, the severe and minute regulations they impose on themselves and each other; their singular social position (arising, I believe, chiefly from the peculiar constitution of Heidelberg society), their songs, their dancing, their fighting, their utter and reckless idleness (I speak of the "Corps-studenten," of course), all combined to form a phase of life of which I had never conceived the slightest notion till I saw it here daily passing before my eyes. One circumstance which I think contributes very much to this state of things is the German custom (followed by our own royal family) of sending young men for a few terms to two or three of the principal universities, instead of allowing them to complete their education at one alone. I was told by a corps-student from the north that his year at Heidelberg would be followed by a year at Berlin; and on my making the remark that he would find Berlin very dull after the gaieties of Heidelberg, he replied—

"Yes; but I shall have no time to make the comparison, I must study so hard there."

"Oh!" said I, "then you come here to play, and go there to work?" to

which proposition he assented with a laugh. Now we know that this sort of thing would be impossible at Oxford or Cambridge, and that the "*set*" which a man joins at the outset, whether a "reading," a "boating," or a "fast set," determines his whole career. Naturally there *are* students (even of the highest class) who attend the universities *really*, as well as ostensibly, for the purpose of learning all they can; but either their number is not large at Heidelberg, or they are completely thrown into the shade by those whose business is pleasure, and I am afraid *I* could not be disinterested enough to wish the case otherwise.



One morning, about a week after my arrival, I was looking out of the window, as it is the privilege of an idle visitor (English) to do, when I perceived a great muster of white caps in the street below, some in deep consultation, others apparently waiting for something or somebody. At the end of about ten minutes there was a general move towards the "*Riesenstein*," where some eight or ten were already leaning out of the windows of their *Kneipe*, talking and smoking. As soon as the rest came in the windows were shut, while a mysterious process of dressing seemed to be going on, during which Harry came in from the Lyceum, and I called him to the window to tell me what the Prussians were doing.

"Why, this is one of their practising mornings, of course," said he, "and they are going into the '*Fecht-boden*' directly; they are putting on their fighting-clothes now."

"Practising what?" asked I.

"Fighting, to be sure; we shall hear the *schlägers* in a minute, if we listen."

"But, if you please, Harry, where is the 'Fecht-boden,' and what are the 'schlägers?'"

"That long room next to the Kneipe is their Fecht-boden, they always practise there once a week at least, and their long swords are called *schlägers*."

"But they surely use foils in their fencing, don't they?"

"Well," said Harry, dubiously, "perhaps they do when they practise, but they always put on their fighting-clothes; so I don't know."

"What do you mean by 'fighting-clothes?' Gloves, or masks, or what?"

"Oh; they are padded all over, wrapped up in towels from neck to heels, arms and all;* and then they wear thick gloves, and caps, and spectacles, and since that student had his nose cut off, you know, they have had shields for their noses, too."

(I did not know at that time the fate of the student's nose, but I heard it afterwards,—a story too horrid for repetition.)

"But if they are so thoroughly protected, Harry, how can they ever be wounded in their duels?"

"Well, there isn't much danger, certainly," said the young gentleman, with a disdainful toss of his head, "and I think it's very poor fun after all. I don't mean to fight when I am a student, but the corps-students *must*, you see, or they couldn't get their degrees."

"Degrees! what on earth can duels have to do with degrees?"

"Oh! not *those* degrees," said Harry, laughing; "but, you know what a 'Fuchs' is, don't you?"

"Yes, a 'freshman,' we call it at home."

"Exactly; well, a 'Fuchs' wears a plain cap (you know the sort I mean, squashed flat, and tumbling forward, with a little poke); and a 'Bursch' wears a pretty round cap."

"I know, like a foraging cap, stuck on one side of his head, rather in front."

"Yes, with a device on the top; and they are ever so proud of those caps (as you may see at the *réunions*),—but a Fuchs cannot be made a Bursch till he has fought a certain number of duels, and fought them *well*, too! You will soon see the gashes they get in these duels; nearly all the corps-students have lots of scars on their cheeks and foreheads, and after a 'fighting-day' you may generally see half-a-dozen walking about with long strips of diachylon-plaster on their faces."

"Half-a-dozen! Surely they don't have half-a-dozen quarrels to settle at once!"

"Oh! they are not quarrels, Miss M., it's a regular matter of business, and this is the way they manage it. A Vandal walks up to a Prussian on the Anlage, and says '*Du bist ein dummer gunge*;' then the Prussian asks him

* I cannot vouch for the correctness of my young friend's statement as regards the use of *towels*; but the current pictures of students' duels show how completely their "fighting-clothes" protect them against serious injury.

if he means it seriously, and when he says he does, the affair is discussed at the Kneipe, and the captains of the two corps arrange the duels, because they know how each man can fight, and they match them accordingly."

"Then is this duelling allowed?"

"Oh, no! they have a place in the Hirsch-gasser.

"Where is that?"

"Over the bridge, where I mean to take you botanising some day. It is a room they hire; nobody is supposed to know where, but *I* know!" said Master Harry with great pride, "and the police contrive to keep out of the way, or else they would have to arrest them, for it is against the law, you know. Sometimes there is a *row*, and the captain has to hide for a little while, but it soon blows over; and everybody knows fighting can't be put down, so they just let it alone."

"I am glad you don't approve of it, Harry; but *why* can't it be put down? Why does not some one introduce boating, for instance, to supersede these senseless duels?"

"Can't be done!" said Harry. "One fellow did bring a boat (an Englishman, he was), but he couldn't get any of them to join him, they say it's 'too much trouble.'"

"Do the students of the same corps ever fight among themselves."

"Never! Such a thing was never heard of, I am sure; and, indeed, Prussians never fight with Swabians, nor Vandalen with Rhenaner; at least, I think so, but I am not sure whether the Rhenaner have not changed sides lately. There! now you can hear the clashing of the *schlägers*!"

I had heard it at intervals throughout our conversation, and occasionally we could even see the flash of the steel. At the end of an hour they returned to their club-room to take off their swathings, and refresh themselves after their exertions, and by one o'clock they had all dispersed. As they passed under the windows I took a closer view of their caps; the "Fuchs-caps" were easy to distinguish, but there appeared to be varieties among the "Burschen," and I could by no means make out the devices embroidered in gold thread on the crowns; the wreaths of vine-leaves encircling the edges seemed to be optional (this point I never quite ascertained), and Harry advised me to apply to a "Prussian" of my acquaintance for an explanation of the device, assuring me that he would be immensely flattered by my interest in the corps. I did so, accordingly, on the first opportunity, and found that the monogram is composed of the letters V. C. S. B., which signify "*Vivat et crescat Saxo-Borussia*;" or, as he kindly translated it, "*Es leben und wachsen Preussen und Sachsen*."

Harry was right in saying that I should see plenty of gashes before I had been long in Heidelberg; they are evidently considered as trophies, and I have seen a young man in a ball-room with as many as three strips of plaister, each two or three inches long, adorning his cheek and brow! To say the least, it is singular taste on the part of those who are decidedly *not* indifferent to personal appearance.

I have more than once mentioned the *réunions* at the Museum, and as the said "Museum" is one of the great attractions of Heidelberg, I must give

some account of it. Let no one imagine a British Museum on a small scale, nor a Berlin Museum, full of pictures and statues. The Heidelberg Museum is a purely social institution; and on what principle the name was bestowed I have been unable to discover. It is supported by private subscriptions—about two guineas a year for a family, and less than thirty shillings for a single individual, lady or gentleman. For this moderate sum the subscribers enjoy advantages scarcely to be found combined, even at a much greater cost, in any city in Europe. There is an excellent library, open for two hours three days in the week, and from which you may borrow any work published within the last century, in German, French, Italian, or English; in fact, I believe, in *any* European language. In a reading-room, open to (male) subscribers, are to be found all the chief newspapers and periodicals of Europe, and this is, as I understand, the chief resort of the professors and politicians of Heidelberg, who meet there on most evenings to read and discuss the news of the day. Throughout the summer there are “réunions” once a fortnight, attended by all the younger, and some of the elder, members, and consisting alternately of an undress ball, beginning at eight in the evening, and ending at twelve, and a concert in the open-air (advertised as “Gartenmusik”), beginning at half-past seven, and over by about eleven. Besides these regular evenings, there are several “extra nights” in the season; sometimes the “Quartett Company” (the four principal male singers from the Opera at Mannheim) come over and give a concert; sometimes there is a dress (or even a *fancy*) ball; sometimes a military band from one of the neighbouring garrison towns takes a holiday of two or three days at Heidelberg, and after performing in the Castle gardens is engaged for an evening at the Museum;—there seems to be always *something* going on; and the delightful climate, the almost republican constitution of society, and the extraordinary variety of races, characters, manners, and languages to be met with at these gatherings, make them charming in no ordinary degree.

The first *réunion* took place about the middle of May, and Mrs. S. and I went to look on; the Doctor did not go, of course, as the dancing is not supposed to be interesting to gentlemen who do not dance, and there is not, as in England, a whist-room. We arrived soon after eight o'clock, and found the Polonaise already begun, though very few ladies were present, and those chiefly the wives and daughters of the Heidelberg shopkeepers. I ought perhaps to explain that the young ladies in question receive their education *with* the daughters of the best families in the place, a circumstance which naturally causes some difficulty in keeping up distinctions of rank on their introduction into life. I suppose this is the reason why it is not usual to see the families of professors, &c., at the monthly balls, the resident English being apparently the only *ladies* (in our sense of the term) present, except as spectators. The ball-room is lofty and spacious, with sofas of crimson velvet at the upper end, and benches along the sides. On one side of the entrance are ranged the musicians—part of the “Stadt Orchester”—who keep admirable time, but much faster than is customary in England; on the other side is a raised platform, with tiers of chairs for those who do not intend to dance. We took our seats in the front row of the latter, with the dancers’

benches at our feet, so that conversation was possible in the pauses of the dance. First, for about twenty minutes, we watched the couples threading the mazes of the Polonaise; up and down, round and across they walked, to the perpetually changing strains of the music, never seeming at a loss as to the figure, though it remained to the last a mystery to me (in fact, I don't believe there is one, except the line taken by the first couple); and whilst this was going on, fresh parties were arriving, till before nine o'clock the arrivals ceased for the evening. The Polonaise ended, the ladies returned to their places, and the peculiar aspect of a Heidelberg ball-room began to display itself.

The gentlemen numbered about *five* to each (dancing) lady; perhaps fifty of them were corps-students, each with his cap under his arm, as the badge of his rank; in dancing they hold their caps in their hands, which may be very distinguished, but must be, I should fancy, singularly inconvenient. All these *cavaliers* formed a phalanx in front of the orchestra (with the exception of a few, chiefly Prussians, who were talking to the young ladies, as Englishmen do), and very awkward and uncomfortable they looked. After a short pause the band struck up a waltz, and those who had fortunately secured partners whirled them away at a rapid pace (German gentlemen almost always waltz well), leaving the majority in their forlorn position at the lower end of the room. But in the first pause a proceeding took place which greatly puzzled me at first, and afterwards exceedingly amused me.

A young student was standing with his partner nearly in front of my seat, chatting merrily, as usual in such cases, when up came another of the same corps, and offered his hand to the lady. She, to my surprise, looked at her partner, who relinquished her with a gracious bow, and in a moment she was flying round the room with the interloper! After a single round, they stopped before the original partner, to whom the second returned her with a bow of thanks, condescendingly acknowledged. She had scarcely taken breath before a *third* young gentleman approached, and went through the same ceremony of *borrowing*, evidently rather to the disgust of her "owner" for the time being, who found himself condemned to stand passive whilst his fair partner enjoyed the waltz with others. I turned to Mrs. S. "What is the meaning of this, Bessie? Do the gentlemen *lend out* their partners here?"

"Something of the sort," replied she; "the custom is called '*hospitiren*,' and was established, I suppose, in pity to the poor victims who fail to secure partners at the beginning of the evening, and who would otherwise, from the disproportionate number of gentlemen, never dance at all, except in the '*Freitours*,' which you will see presently."

"What is the meaning of '*hospitiren*?' I never heard the word before."

"It is an academical term used to express a student's attending *one* of a course of lectures to which he has not subscribed; you see at once the wit of its application here; but it is sometimes rather hard on the original partner, who may engage a nice girl entirely for the benefit of his friends, and never get a second turn with her himself."

"Then may not the lady choose whether she will be *lent* or not?"

"No, that would never do. She may profess to be tired, and *sit down*

with her partner, but that is so *very* pointed a compliment, it is seldom done, and I have heard it remarked, as a proof of conceit in a certain student, 'he never writes his name on your card, but *trusts to hospitieren*.'"

"It certainly makes the scene more amusing." And I continued to watch the dancing, which was, I am bound to say, exceedingly good, though the demi-toilette of the German ladies was anything but tasteful or becoming. The students appeared to make themselves very agreeable, and I was struck by their gentlemanly manners, especially those of the "Preussen" and "Westphalen."

Meanwhile valse, mazurka, and schottische (Anglicè polka), followed each other in rapid succession, and I began to wonder whether the quadrille was obsolete, when a "Française" was called, and the sets were formed, the number of dancers being augmented by some of the "wallflowers," who seemed to think it requisite to distinguish themselves by wearing *bonnets*, so far as the peculiar structures in vogue this year deserve that name. There appear to be generally two *Françaises* and two sets of Lancers in the course of the evening, all the rest being round dances. After the quadrille (and the general galop which in this country concludes it) came a "*Frei-tour für Herren*," in which all engagements are in abeyance, and any gentleman is allowed to ask any lady (for one *tour* only) with or without introduction. This also occurs about twice in an evening; but the most wonderful performance to a looker-on is the "*Frei-tour für Damen*," which is, I believe, only called once, and during which the stricter chaperones insist on their charges "sitting out." On this occasion all the *cavaliers* stand in a square in the centre of the room, and the young ladies go and select their partners as they please, also for one *tour* only; after which the gentleman deposits his partner on her sofa and returns to his former station till again chosen. About half past ten there was an interval of half an hour, the gas was lowered, the orchestra departed (to their supper, I suppose), and those who chose to take refreshments (*viz.*, most of the German ladies present, and many of the gentlemen) went into an adjoining room, where substantial fare was provided for all who thought it worth paying for. My friend and I were not of the number, and presently a couple whom we knew came and sat on the bench at our feet, and we discussed "ye manners and customs of ye ball-room" in England, France, and Germany, coming to the unanimous conclusion that those of the latter country were by far the most amusing of the three. At the same time the gentleman (a corps-student from the north) reminded us that Heidelberg was by no means to be taken as a specimen of Germany in general, for that in the north, at least, the distinctions of rank were still as rigidly observed as in France under the old *régime*. "In fact," he added, "many people object to these *réunions*, as being '*ein bisschen gemischt*,' but for my part I think that makes them '*viel interessanter*;' and as most of us remain here only a few months, and are never again brought into contact with our ball-room acquaintances, no embarrassing '*relations*' are likely to arise." I was amused, later in my sojourn at Heidelberg, by the contrast between this philosophical view of things and that taken by another student, not a German, who turned up his aristocratic nose at the Museum and its balls, and opined that "Si une

demoiselle française allait prier un cavalier pour la valse, sa mère aurait de la difficulté à l'établir!"

On that first occasion we stayed till midnight, as I wished to see the whole; afterwards, we generally left the room during the interval at half-past ten; but even those who habitually stay to the last can scarcely be called dissipated, when we think of the hours kept at an English ball.

The "Garten-musik" did not begin so early as usual this year, owing to the cold weather; but when the sudden burst of heat came in June, the first *réunion* was held in the open air, and very charming it was. To this "Garten-musik" came most of the professors with their families, and many of the clergy; tables were placed under the lime trees, and gas-lamps shone among the foliage; the air was still and balmy, and the stars shone gloriously. The band was the very best of the Stadt Orchester, and they performed a selection of twenty-four pieces, divided into groups of four, with a slight pause between each.

In the summer it is the fashion to give "country parties" of the nature of an English pic-nic, only at the sole expense of the inviter, and these are generally very pleasant, and less formal than the regular parties, where gentlemen talk to gentlemen, and ladies to ladies, almost exclusively. There is no opera at Heidelberg, but a very pretty and well-managed one at Mannheim, which is within half-an-hour's journey by train, and tickets are sent to Zwicker's (one of the Heidelberg booksellers) for sale. Unfortunately, the regular performances always take place on Sunday, but on special occasions, such as the great horse fair at the beginning of May, or the visit of a "star" from Vienna, there are "extra nights" during the week, which are duly advertised at the Museum, and on the walls of public buildings, etc., in Heidelberg. On the first of these occasions during my visit, we all failed to see the advertisement, and so missed Meyerbeer's *Afrikanerin*, but this was soon followed by *Oberon*, and Weber's lovely music is always fresh and enchanting; so I was consoled. Not so Bessie; the *Afrikanerin* was said to be the finest "spectacle" ever seen, and she had waited to see it with me; therefore she was much disappointed. I do not care in the least for "spectacle," and dislike Meyerbeer. I accordingly enjoyed my old friend *Oberon* thoroughly, especially as the singing and orchestra were very good, and the fairy *tableau* at the end excellent. We spent a few hours in Mannheim before the opera, and saw what there was to be seen, which is not much. We walked through the palace gardens, and admired the magnificent growth of Virginian creeper which hangs like a rich veil over the colonnades of the palace; indeed, everywhere around Heidelberg this plant grows like ivy over ruins, contributing much by its luxuriance to the general effect of *greenery* to which I have already referred. We made our pilgrimage, of course, to the confluence of the Rhine and Neckar, and then we found out the new synagogue, which is an exceedingly fine building, and witnessed the Jewish service. But of all the dull, dreary, flat, empty, and yet well-to-do-looking towns I ever saw, deliver me from Mannheim!

THE HISTORY OF ROBERT FALCONER.

PART II.—HIS YOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

ROBERT KNOCKS—AND THE DOOR IS NOT OPENED.

THE remainder of that winter was dreary indeed. Every time Robert went up the stair to his garret, he passed the door of a tomb. With that gray mortar Mary St. John was walled up, like the nun he had read of in the *Marmion* she had lent him. He might have rung the bell at the street door and been admitted into the temple of his goddess, but a certain vague terror of his grannie, combined with equally vague qualms of conscience for having deceived her, and the approach in the far distance of a ghastly suspicion that violins, pianos, moonlight, and lovely women were distasteful to the over-ruling Fate, and obnoxious to the vengeance stored in the gray cloud of his providence, drove him from the awful entrance of the temple of his Isis.

Nor did Miss St. John dare to make any advances to the dreadful old lady. She would wait. Mrs. Forsyth cared nothing about the whole affair. It only gave her fresh opportunity for smiling condescensions about "poor Mrs. Falconer." So Paradise was over and gone.

And the violin was scattered to the winds. Would any of her ashes ever rise in the corn and moan in the ripening wind of autumn? Might not some atoms of the *bonny leddy* creep into the pines on the hill, whose "soft and soul-like sounds" had taught him to play the Flowers of the Forest on those strings which, like the nerves of an amputated limb, yet thrilled through his being? Or might not some particle be blown by the winds to a sycamore forest of Italy, and creep up through the channels of its life to some finely-rounded curve of a noble tree, on the side that ever looks sunwards, and be chosen yet once again by the violin-hunter, to be wrought into a new and fameless instrument which might one day comfort some tone-loving boy like himself? Could it be that it had learned its wondrous music in those forests, from the shine of the sun, and the sighing of the winds through, the sycamores and pines? For Robert knew that the broad-leaved sycamore, and the sharp, needle-leaved pine, had each its share in the violin. But as the wild innocence of human nature, uncorrupted by wrong, untaught by suffering, is to that nature struggling out of darkness to the light, such and so different is the living wood, with its sweetest tones of obedient impulse, answering only to the wind which bloweth where it listeth, to that wood, chosen, separated, individualized, tortured into strange, almost vital shape, after a law to us nearly unknown, strung with strings from animal organizations, and put into the hands of man to utter the feelings of a soul that has

passed through a like history. This last Robert could not yet think, but he had to grow able to think it by being himself made an instrument of God's music.

What he could think was that the glorious mystery of his bonny leddy was gone for ever—and alas! she had no soul. Here was an eternal sorrow. He could never meet her again. His affections, which must live for ever, were set upon that which had passed away. But the child that weeps because his mutilated doll will not rise from the dead, will yet find a true relief from his sorrow, both human and divine. He will find that the thing, even in the doll, which made him love the doll, has not passed away. And Robert might yet be comforted for the loss of his bonny leddy. If she had had a soul, nothing but her own self could satisfy him. If she had no soul, another body might take her place, nor occasion reproach of inconstancy.

But in the meantime, the shears of Fate having cut the string of the sky-soaring kite of his imagination, had left him with the stick in his hand. And thus the rest of that winter was dreary enough. The glow was out of his heart; the glow was out of the world. The bleak, kindless wind was hissing through those pines that looked down on Bodyfauld, and over the dead garden, where in the summer time the rose had looked down so lovingly on the heartsease. If he had stood once more at gloaming in that field, no dim reminders of Flodden would have come back upon his soul, but a keen sense of personal misery and hopeless cold. Was the summer a lie?

Not so. The winter holds back that the summer may take needful time and do its work well; for the winter is but a sleeping summer.

But Robert being now in the winter of his discontent, and finding no help in nature, was driven inwards—into his garret, into his soul. There, the door of his paradise being walled up, he began, vaguely, blindly, to knock against other doors—sometimes against stone walls and rocks, taking them for doors—as travel-worn, and hence brain-sick men have done in a desert of mountains. A door, out or in, he must find.

It fell, too, that Miss St. John accepted an invitation from some friends who lived in a coast town twenty miles off; and a season of heavy snow followed by frost setting in, she was absent for six weeks, during which time, without a single care to trouble him from without, Robert was in the very desert of desolation. His spirits sank fearfully. He would even pass his old master, the shoemaker, in the street, with scarce a recognition, as if the bond of their relation had been utterly broken, had vanished in the smoke of the martyred violin, and all their affection had gone into the dust-heap of the past.

Dooble Sanny's character did not improve. He took more and more whisky. His bouts of drinking alternated with fits of hopeless repentance. His work was more neglected than ever, and his wife having no money to spend even upon necessities, in very desperation applied to her husband's bottle for comfort. This comfort, to tell the truth, he never grudged her; and sometimes before midday they would both be drunk—a condition

expedited by the lack of food. When they began to recover, they would quarrel fiercely; and at last became a nuisance to the whole street. Little did the whisky-hating old lady know to what god she had really offered up that violin, as shown in the acceptance and consequences of the holocaust.

And now in Robert began to appear the first signs of a practical outcome of such truth as his grandmother had taught him, operating upon the necessities of a simple and earnest nature. He had no comfort, and, without reasoning about it, he felt that life ought to have comfort—from which point he began to conclude that the only thing left was to try whether the God in whom his grandmother believed might not help him. If He spoke to him but one kind word, it would be the very soul of comfort; he would no more be lonely. A fountain of glad imaginations gushed up in his heart at the thought. What if from the cold winter of his life, he had but to open the door of his garret-room, and, kneeling by the bare bedstead, enter into the summer of God's presence! What if God spoke to him face to face! He had so spoken to Moses. He sought him from no fear of the future, but from present desolation; and if God came near to him, it would not be with storm and tempest, but with the voice of a friend. And surely if there was a God at all, that is, not a power greater than man, but a power by whose power man was, he must hear the voice of the creature whom he had made, when that voice came crying out of the very need which he had created. Younger people than Robert are capable of such divine metaphysics. Hence he continued to disappear from his grandmother's parlour at much the same hour as if he had been going to Miss St. John's room. In the cold, desolate garret, he knelt on the floor, and cried out into that which lay beyond the thought that cried, the unknowable infinite, after the God that may be known as surely as a little child knows his mysterious mother. And from behind him, the pale-blue, star-crowded sky shone upon his head, through the window that looked upwards only.

Mrs. Falconer saw that he still went away as he had been wont, and instituted observations, the result of which was the knowledge that he went to his own room. Her heart smote her from this discovery, and from seeing the boy look so sad and troubled. There was scarce room for increase of love, but much for increase of kindness, and her kindness his grandmother did increase. Much in truth he needed any crumb of comfort that might fall from the table of God's "feastful friends."

Night after night he came out of that garret cold to the very heart. God was not to be found, he said then. He said afterwards that even then "God was with him though he knew it not."

For the very first night, the moment that he knelt and cried, "O Father in heaven, hear me, and let thy face shine upon me—" like a flash of burning fire the words shot from the door of his heart: "I dinna care for him to love me, gin he doesna love ilka body." No more prayer went from the desolate boy that night, although he knelt for an hour in the freezing dark. Loyal to that which he had been taught, he struggled hard to reduce his rebellious will to what he supposed to be the will of God. In

vain. Ever the instinct spoke within him that what he wanted was the love that belonged to his human nature, his human needs—not a love granted to a favourite of heaven. He had a dim consciousness that he would be a traitor to his race if he accepted a love, even from God, given him as an exception from his kind. But he did not care to have such a love. It was not what his heart yearned for. It was not *love*. He could not love such a love. Yet he strove against it all—fought for religion against right as he could, struggled to reduce his rebellious feelings, to love that which was unlovely, to choose that which was abhorrent to him, until nature would almost give way under the effort, and he would sink moaning on the floor, or stretch himself like a corpse, save that it was face downwards, on the boards of the bedstead. Night after night he returned to the battle, but with no permanent *success*. What a success that would have been! Night after night he came pale and worn from the conflict, found his grandmother and Shargar composed, and in the quietness of despair sat down beside them to his Latin version.

He little thought that at the moment when he stirred to leave the upper room, a pale-faced, red-eyed figure rose from its seat on the top of the stair by the door, and sped with long-legged noiselessness to reach a seat by the grandmother before he should enter. Shargar saw that Robert was unhappy, and the nearest he could come to the sharing of his unhappiness was to take his place outside the door within which he had retreated. And little did Shargar think, on his part, that Robert, without knowing it, was pleading for him inside—pleading for him and for all his race in the weeping that would not be comforted.

Robert had not the vaguest fancy that God was with him even then in the closest teaching—his spirit groaning with the spirit of the boy in intercession that could not be uttered. If God had come to him then and comforted him with the assurance of individual favour—but the very supposition is a taking of his name in vain. Had Robert found comfort in the fancied assurance that God was his especial friend, that some private favour was granted to his prayers, then, indeed, would he have been left to his own conceit and overweening, to bring forth fruits not meet for repentance, but fruits for which repentance alone is meet. But God *was* with him, and was indeed victorious in the boy when he rose from his knees, as he thought, for the last time, saying, “I cannot—I will pray no more.”—With a burst of bitter tears he sat down on the bedside till the storm was over, then dried his dull eyes, in which the old outlook had withered away, and trod unknowingly in the silent footsteps of Shargar, who was ever one corner in advance of him, down to the dreary lessons and unheeded prayers; but, thank God, not the sleepless night, for some griefs will bring sleep the sooner.

Mrs. Falconer, before she went to sleep, gave thanks that the boys had been at their prayers together. And so in a very deep sense they had.

And well they might have been; for Shargar was nearly as desolate as Robert, and would certainly, had his mother claimed him now, have gone on the tramp with her again. Wherein could this civilized life show itself to him better than that to which he had been born? For clothing he cared little,

and eating or drinking, save for the destruction of hunger or thirst, had as yet asserted few claims of its own. Wherein is the life of that man who merely does his eating and drinking and clothing after a civilized fashion better than that of the gipsy or tramp? If the civilized man is honest to boot, and does some true work for God's community in return for the bread or turtle that he eats, and the gipsy, on the other hand, steals his dinner, I recognize the importance of the difference; but if the rich man plunders the community by exorbitant profits, or speculation with other people's money, while the gipsy only adds a fowl or two to the produce of his tinkering, I return to my question: Wherein, I say, is the warm house, the windows hung with purple, and the table covered with fine linen, more divine than the tent or the blue sky and the dipping in the dish? Why should not Shargar prefer a life with the mother God had given him to a life with Mrs. Falconer? Why should he prefer geography to rambling, or Latin to Romany? His purposelessness and his love for Robert alone kept him where he was.

The next evening, having given up his praying, Robert sat still with his Sallust before him. But the fount of tears began to swell, and the more he tried to overcome it, the more it went on swelling till his throat was filled with a lump of pain. He rose and left the room. But he could not go near the garret again. That door too was closed. He opened the street door instead, and went out. There, nothing was to be seen but faint blue air full of moonlight, solid houses, and shining snow. Bare-headed he wandered down the street and round the corner of the house to the window whence first he had heard the sweet sounds of the pianoforte. The fire within lighted up the crimson curtains, but no voice of music came forth. The window was as dumb as the pale, faintly befogged moon overhead, itself seeming but a skylight through which shone the sickly light of the passionless world of the dead. Not a form was in the street, the eyes of the houses only gleaming here and there upon the snow. He leaned his elbow on the window-sill behind which stood that sealed fountain of lovely sound, looked up at the moon, cared nothing for her or for anything else in heaven or on earth, and sunk into a reverie, in which nothing was consciously present but a stream of fog-smoke that flowed slowly, listlessly across the face of the moon, like the ghost of a dead cataract. All at once a wailful sound arose in his head. He did not think for some time whether it was born in his brain, or entered it from without. At length he recognized the 'Flowers of the Forest,' played as only the soutar could play it. But alas! the cry responsive to his bow came only from the auld wife—no more from the bonny ledly. Then Robert remembered that there had been a humble wedding that morning on the opposite side of the way; in the street department of the jollity of which Shargar had taken a small share by firing a brass cannon, subsequently confiscated by Mrs. Falconer. But this was a strange tune to play at a wedding. The soutar having got half way to his goal of drunkenness, had begun to repent for the fiftieth time that quarter, had with his repentance mingled the memory of the bonny ledly ruthlessly tortured to death for his wrong, and had glided from the strathspey he was playing into that sorrowful moaning. The tune reaching the ears of his disconsolate pupil,

interpreted itself to him as he had never understood it before, not even in the stubble-field; for it now spoke his own feelings of waste misery and loneliness. Indeed Robert learnt more of music in those few minutes of the foggy winter night and open street, shut out of all doors, but with the tones of an ancient grief and lamentation floating over the sad present, than he could from many lessons even of Miss St. John. He was cold to the heart, yet he went in somewhat comforted.

Things had gone sadly ill with him—outside of Paradise, deserted of his angel, in the frost and the snow, listening to the voice of the despised violin, once more the source of a sad comfort, whose fountain was unsealed by the drunkenness of its owner. But there is no better discipline than an occasional descent from what we count well-being, to a former less happy or despised condition. And one of the results of this taste of damnation in Robert was, that after he went to bed that night, his heart began to turn gently towards his old master. How much did he not owe him, after all! Had he not acted ill and ungratefully in deserting him as he had done? His own vessel filled to the brim with grief, had he not let the waters of bitterness overflow into the heart of the souter? The wail of that violin echoed in Robert's heart, not for Flodden, but for the debased nature that drew forth the plaint. Comrades in misery, why should they part? What right had he to forsake an old friend and benefactor because he himself was unhappy, even although his grief had been in part occasioned by his friend's inadvertence? He would go and see him the very next night. And he would make friends once more with the "much-suffering instrument" he had so wrongfully despised.

CHAPTER II.

THE STROKE.

So the season of prayer being, as he thought, over now, instead of retiring to his garret the following night, he left the house and sped like a greyhound to Dooble Sanny's shop, lifted the latch, and entered.

By the light of a single dip set on a chair, he saw the shoemaker seated on his stool, one hand lying on the lap of his leathern apron, his other hand hanging down by his side, and the fiddle on the ground at his feet. His wife stood behind him, wiping her eyes with her blue apron. Through all its accumulated dirt, the face of the souter looked ghastly, and they were eyes of despair that he lifted to the face of the lad as he stood holding the latch in his hand. Mrs. Alexander moved towards Robert, drew him in, and gently closed the door behind him, resuming her station like a sculptured mourner behind her motionless husband.

"What on airth's the maitter wi' ye, Sandy?" said Robert.

"Eh, Robert!" returned the shoemaker, and a tone of affection tinged the mournfulness with which he uttered the strange words—"eh, Robert! the Almighty *will* gang his ain gait, and I'm in his grup noo."

"He's had a stroke," said his wife, without removing her apron from her eyes.

"I'm sair punished," resumed the souter, in a despairing voice, "for abusin'

my ain auld wife for the sake o' your bonny leddy. The tane's gane a' to aise an' stew (*ashes and dust*), an' frae the tither," he went on, looking down on the violin at his feet as if it had been something dead in its youth—"an frae the tither I canna draw a cheep, for my richt han' has forgotten her cunnin'. Man, Robert, I canna lift it frae my side."

"Ye maun gang to yer bed," said Robert, greatly concerned.

"Ow ay, I maun gang to my bed, and syne to the kirkyard, and syne to hell, I ken that weel eneuch. Robert, I lea' my fiddle to you. Be guid to the auld wife, man—better nor I hae been. An auld wife's better nor nae fiddle."

He stooped, lifted the violin with his left hand, gave it to Robert, rose, and made for the door. They helped him up the creaking stair, got him half-undressed, and laid him in his bed. Robert put the violin on the top of a press within sight of the sufferer, left him groaning, and ran for the doctor. Having seen him set out for the patient's dwelling, he ran home to his grandmother.

Now while Robert was absent, occasion had arisen to look for him: unusual occurrence, a visitor had appeared, no less a person than Mr. Innes, the schoolmaster. Shargar had been banished in consequence from the parlour, and had seated himself outside Robert's room, never doubting that Robert was inside. Presently he heard the bell ring, and then Betty came up the stair, and said Robert was wanted. Thereupon Shargar knocked at the door, and as there was neither voice nor hearing, opened it, and found, with a kind of horror, that he had been watching an empty room. He made no haste to communicate the fact to Betty, or to Mrs. Falconer. Robert might return any moment, and the latter be nothing the wiser. He sat down on the bedstead and waited. But instead of Robert, Betty came up again, and before Shargar could prevent her, walked into the room with her candle in her hand, and saw only Shargar. In vain did Shargar entreat her to go and say to her mistress that Robert would be with her presently. Betty would not risk the danger of being discovered in connivance, and descended with news which opened afresh the fountain of the old lady's anxiety. She did not, however, betray her disquietude to Mr. Innes.

She had asked the schoolmaster to visit her, in order that she might consult him about Robert's future. Mr. Innes expressed a high opinion of the boy's faculties and attainments, and strongly urged that he should be sent to college. Mrs. Falconer inwardly shuddered at the temptations to which this course would expose him; but he must either leave home some day, or be apprenticed to a trade in the town. Probably she would have taken the latter course without hesitation, but for religion towards the boy's father and mother, whose feelings she knew would have been much opposed to it. While the schoolmaster was yet advocating especial preparation for the competition in the end of the year, at which if he gained a good *bursary*, his grandmother would be relieved for four years from any further draught upon her limited means, Robert entered.

"Whaur hae ye been, Robert?" said Mrs. Falconer.

"At Dooble Sanny's," answered the boy.

of "What hae ye been at there?"

"Helpin' him til 's bed."

"What's come ower him?"

"A stroke."

"That's what comes o' drinkin', an' playin' the fiddle, an' sic like."

"I never heard afore o' a stroke comin' frae a fiddle, grannie. It comes oot o' a clood whiles. Gin he had hauden til 's fiddle, he wad hae been playin' her the nicht, in place o' haein' his airm lyin' at 's side like a lang lingel."

"Hum!" said his grandmother. "Ye dinna believe in the judgment o' God!"

"Nae upo' fiddles," returned Robert.

Mr. Innes sat and listened, concealing his amusement at this passage of arms.

A few days ago, Robert would have been incapable of speaking thus. His nature had now arrived at the point of casting off the incubus of his grandmother's authority, in so far as to assert some measure of freedom, and whatever he did, to do it openly. But how had his nature arrived at this point? Partly by despair. His very hopelessness of a hearing in heaven made him indifferent to things on earth, and therefore bolder; and thus, strange as it may seem, the blessing of God descended on him in the despair which enabled him to speak out and free his soul from the weight of concealment. But it was not despair alone that gave him strength. On his way home from the shoemaker's, he had been thinking what he could do for him. Now Shargar and he still possessed the couple of sovereigns they had received from Dr. Anderson—from fear of being found out, and from reluctance to part with a coin neither of them had ever beheld before. Both of these sovereigns Robert had with tyrannical benevolence devoted to the necessities of the case. And he had besides resolved, come of it what might, that he would visit the shoemaker every evening, and do what he best could to comfort him by playing upon his violin. So that it was loving-kindness towards man, as well as despair towards God, that gave him strength to resolve that between him and his grandmother all should be above board from henceforth.

"Nae upo' fiddles," Robert had said.

"But upo' them 'at plays them," returned his grandmother.

"Na; nor upo' them 'at burns them," retorted Robert—impudently it must be confessed; for every man is open to commit the fault of which he is least capable.

But Mrs. Falconer had far more regard to her own dignity than to the indulgence of her feelings. Possibly too both her sense of justice, which Falconer always said was stronger in her than in any other woman he had ever known, and some movement of her conscience interfered. At all events she was silent, and Robert rushed into the breach which his last discharge had effected.

"And I want to tell ye, grannie, that I mean to gang and play the fiddle to puir Sanny ilka nicht for the best pairt o' an hoor; and excep' ye lock the door an' hide the key, I *will* gang. The puir sinner sanna be desertit by God an' man baith."

He scarcely knew what he was saying, before it was out of his mouth; and as if to cover it up, he hurried on—

"An' there's mair in 't. Dr. Anderson gae Shargar an' me a sovereign the piece. An' Dooble Sanny s' hae that, to haud him ohn deid o' hunger an' cauld."

"What for didna ye tell me 'at Dr. Anderson had gien ye sic a sicht o' siller? It was ill-faured o' ye—an' him as weel."

"'Cause ye wad hae sent it back til 'im; an' Shargar and me we thocht we wad rather keep it."

"Considerin' 'at I'm at sae muckle expense wi' ye baith, it wadna hae been ill-contrived to hae brocht the siller to me, an' latten me du wi' 't as I thocht fit.—Gang na awa', laddie," she added, as she saw Robert about to leave the room.

"I'll be back in a minute, grannie," returned Robert.

"He's a fine lad, that!" said Mr. Innes; "an' guid 'll come o' 'm, and that 'll be heard tell o'."

"Gin he had but the grace o' God, there wadna be muckle to compleen o'," acquiesced his grandmother.

"There's time eneuch for that, Mistress Faulkner. Ye canna get auld heids upo' young shootthers, ye ken."

"'Deed for that maitter, as far's the grace o' God's concerned, ye may get mony an auld heid upo' auld shootthers, an' nae a spark o' that in 't to lat it see hoo to lay itsel' doon i' the grave."

Robert returned before Mr. Innes had made up his mind as to whether the old lady intended a personal rebuke.

"Hae, grannie," he said, going up to her, and putting the two sovereigns in her white palm.

He had found some difficulty in making Shargar give up his, else he would have returned sooner.

"What's this o' 't, laddie?" said Mrs. Falconer. "Hoots! I'm nae gaein to tak' yer siller. Lat the puir soutar-cratur's hae 't. But dinna gie them mair nor a shillin' or twa at ance, jist to haud them in life. They deserve nae mair. But they maunna sterve. And jist ye tell them, laddie, 'at gin they spen' ae saxpence o' 't upo' whusky, they s' get nae mair."

"Ay, ay, grannie," said Robert. "And what about the fiddlin', grannie?" he added, half playfully.

But he had gone too far. She vouchsafed no reply, and her face grew stern with offence. It was one thing to give them bread to eat, another to give them music and gladness. No music but that which sprung from effectual calling and the perseverance of saints could be lawful in a world that was under the wrath and curse of God.

"Gang yer wa's," she said, at length. "Mr. Innes and me has some business to mak' an' en' o', an' we want nae assistance."

Robert rejoined Shargar, who was still bemoaning the loss of his sovereign. His face brightened when he saw the well-known yellow shine once more, but darkened again as soon as Robert told him to what end the coin was now devoted.

"It's my ain," he said, with a suppressed expostulatory growl.

Robert threw one of the sovereigns on the floor.

"Tak' yer filthy lucre!" he said with contempt, and turned to leave Shargar alone in the garret with his sovereign.

"Bob!" Shargar almost screamed, "tak' it, or I'll cut my throat."

This was his constant threat when he was really in earnest.

"Cut it, an' hae dune wi' 't," said Robert, cruelly.

Shargar burst out crying.

"Len' me yer knife, than, Bob," he sobbed, holding out his hand.

Robert burst into a roar of laughter, caught up the sovereign from the floor, sped with it to the baker's, who refused to change it because he had no knowledge of anything representing the sum of twenty shillings except a pound-note, succeeded in getting silver for it at the bank, and then ran to the soutar's.

While he was gone, the subject of his fate was resumed and finally settled between his grandmother and the schoolmaster. The former, in regard of the boy's determination to befriend the shoemaker in the matter of music as well as of money, would now have sent him at once to the grammar-school in Old Aberdeen, to prepare for the competition at the commencement of the following session in the month of November; but the latter persuaded her that it would be a needless expense, and that if he gave his whole attention to Latin till the next summer, and then went to the grammar-school for a couple of months or so, it would be quite sufficient to afford him a good chance of success. As to the violin, the schoolmaster said, wisely enough:—

"He that *will* to Cupar *maun* to Cupar; and gin ye *kep* (*intercept*) him upo' the shore-road, he'll tak' to the hill-road; an' I s' warran' a braw lad like Robert 'll get mony a ane in Ebberdeen 'll be ready enouch to gie him a lift wi' the fiddle, an' 'll tak' him into raither waur company nor the puir bed-ridden soutar; an' wi' you an' me to hing on at the tail o' him like, he canna gang that fest doon the hill afore he learns wit."

"Hum!" was the old lady's comprehensive and not incomprehensible response.

It was further arranged that Robert should be informed of their conclusion that he might be roused in anticipation of the trial upon which his course in life must depend.

Nothing could have been better for Robert than to have thus opened before him the prospect of a college education. But his first thought at the news was not of the delights of learning nor of the honourable course that would ensue, but of Eric Ericson, the poverty-stricken, friendless descendant of yarls and sea-rovers. He would see him—the only man who understood him! Only when the passion of this thought abated, he began to see the other advantages before him. Ere half an hour was gone—so practical and thorough was he in all his proposals and means—he had begun to go over his Rudiments again from the first page to the last. He seconded all his master's efforts; wrote a version or translation from English into Latin five times a week; read Cæsar, Virgil, or Tacitus, every day; and easily gained permission from his grandmother, who began to think that music, thanks

to her care, had got no pernicious hold of him, to have his bed removed to his own garret, where he would often rise at four in the morning, even when the snow lay thick on the roof, light his lamp by means of a tinder-box and a splinter of wood dipped in sulphur, and sitting down in the keen cold, turn half a page of Addison into something as near Ciceronian Latin as he could effect. This would take him from an hour and a half to two hours, when he would tumble again into bed, blue and stiff, and sleep till it was time to get up and go to the morning school before breakfast. His health was excellent, else it could never have stood such treatment. Steadily he worked, keeping the one object of the competition in view, and, as he possessed a natural turn for language, enjoying the work.

CHAPTER III.

"THE END CROWNS ALL."

ALMOST his sole relaxation lay in the visit he paid every evening to the souter and his wife. Their home was a wretched place; but notwithstanding the poverty in which they were now sunk, Robert soon began to see a change in it, like the dawning of light, in the shape of something white here and there about the room. The very expectation of Robert's visits set the poor woman trying to make the place look decent. It soon became at least clean, and there is a very real sense in which cleanliness is next to godliness. If the people who want to do good among the poor would give up patronizing them, would cease from trying to convert them before they have gained the smallest personal influence with them, would visit them as those who have just as good a right to be here as they have, it would be all the better for both them and the poor.

For the first week or so, Alexander, unable either to work or play, and deprived of his usual consolation of drink, was very testy and unmanageable. If Robert, who strove to do his best in the hope of alleviating the poor fellow's sufferings—which were those of the mind and not of the body—happened to mistake the time or to draw a false note from the violin, he would swear as if he had been the Grand Turk and Robert one of his slaves. But Robert was too vexed with himself, when he gave occasion to such an outburst, to mind the outburst itself. And invariably when such an event had taken place, the shoemaker would ask forgiveness before he went. Holding out his left hand, from which nothing would efface the stains of rosin and lamp-black and heel-ball, save the sweet cleansing of mother-earth, he would say:

"Robert, ye'll jist pit the sweirin' doon wi' the lave (*rest*), an' score 't oot, a'thegither. I'm an ill-tongued vratch, an' I'm beginnin' to see 't. But, man, ye're jist behavin' to me like God himsel'; an' gin it warna for you, I wad jist lie here roarin' an' greitin' an' damnin' frae mornin' to nicht. Ye *will* be in the morn again—willna' ye?" he would always end by asking with some anxiety.

"Of coorse I will," Robert would answer.

"Gude nicht, than, gude nicht. I'll try an' get a sicht o' my sins ance

mair," said Alexander, one evening. "Gin I could only be a wee bit sorry for them, I reckon He wad forgie me. Dinna ye think he wad, Robert?"

"Nae doobt, nae doobt," answered Robert, hurriedly. "They a' say 'at gin a man repents the richt gait, he'll forgie him."

He could not say more than "They say," for his own horizon was all dark, and even in saying this much he almost felt like a hypocrite. There was a terrible waste strewn thick with the potsherds of hope outside that door of prayer which he had, as he thought, nailed up for ever.

"An' what is the richt gait?" asked the soutar.

"Deed, that's mair nor I ken, Sandy," answered Robert, mournfully.

"Weel, gin ye dinna ken, what's to come o' me?" said Alexander, anxiously.

"Ye maun speir at Himsel," returned Robert, "an' jist tell him 'at ye dinna ken, but ye'll do onything 'at he likes."

With these words he took his leave hurriedly, somewhat amazed to find that he had given the soutar the strange advice to try just what he had tried so unavailingly himself. And stranger still, he found himself, before he reached home, praying once more in his heart—both for Dooble Sanny and for himself. From that hour a faint hope was with him that some day he might try again, though he dared not yet encounter such effort and agony.

All this time, he had never doubted that there was a God; nor had he ventured to say within himself that perhaps God was not good; he had simply come to the conclusion that for him there was no approach to the source of his being. He did not follow the matter further.

In the course of a fortnight or so, when his system had covered over its craving after the fever of whisky, the irritability of the shoemaker almost disappeared, while his conscience continued as active as before. He began to praise Robert's playing, and to make allowance for his faults at the same time that he corrected them. And Robert made greater progress than ever. I do not say that his style could have grown fine under such a master, but at least he learned the difference between slovenliness and accuracy, and between accuracy and meaning.

One evening he was scraping away at Tullochgorum when Mr. MacCleary walked in. Robert ceased playing. The minister gave him one searching glance, and sat down by the bedside. Robert would have left the room.

"Dinna gang, Robert," said Sandy, and Robert remained.

The clergyman talked very faithfully as far as the shoemaker was concerned; though whether he was equally faithful towards God might be questioned. He was one of those prudent men who are afraid of dealing out the truth too freely lest it should fall on thorns or on stony places. Believing that a certain precise condition of mind was necessary for the proper reception of certain truths, he would endeavour to bring about that condition first. He did not know that the truth can sometimes make its own furrow in the heart, and that the heart may be sometimes ready for it before the parish-priest is capable of perceiving the fact, seeing that the imposition of hands does not necessarily confer either love or a clear sight. He therefore dwelt upon the

sins of the soutar, magnifying them and making them hideous, in the idea that he was thus magnifying the law and making it honourable, while of the tenderness of God to the sinner especially, he said not a word. Robert sat by, offended, he scarcely knew why, with the minister's mode of treating his friend; and after Mr. MacCleary had taken a far kinder leave of them than God would have approved of if he had resembled the representation he had been giving of him, Robert sat still, oppressed equally with his ignorance and his longing after the light.

"It's a' true," said the soutar at length; "but, man Robert, dinna ye think the minister was some sair upo' me?"

"I duv think it," answered Robert.

"Something beirs 't in upo' me 'at He wadna be sae sair upo' me himsel'. There's something i' the New Testament, some gait, 'at's pitten 't into my heid; though, faith, I dinna ken whaur to luik for 't. Canna ye help me oot wi' 't, man?"

It was not surprising that Robert could think of nothing but the parable of the prodigal son. He got the New Testament and read it. Mrs. Alexander sat at the foot of the bed and listened.

"There!" cried the soutar, triumphantly, "I telled ye sae! Not ae word about the puir lad's sins. It was a' a hurry to get the new shune upo' 'im, an' win at the calfe an' the fiddlin' an' the dancin'. O Lord," he broke out, "I'm comin' hame as fest 's I can; but my sins are jist like muckle bauchles (*shoes down at heel*) upo' my feet an' winna lat me. I expec' nae ring an' nae robe, but I wad fain hae a fiddle i' my grup whan the neist prodigal comes hame; an' gin I dinna fiddle weel, it s' no be my wyte. Eh, man! but that is what I ca' gude, an' a' the minister said—honest man—'s jist blether till 't. O Lord, I sweir gin ever I win up again, I'll put in ilka steek (*stitch*) as gin the shune war for the feet o' the prodigal himsel'. It sall be gude wark, O Lord. An' I'll never lat taste o' whusky intil my mou'—nor smell o' whusky intil my nose, gin sae be 'at I can help it—I sweir 't, O Lord. An' gin I binna raised up again——"

Here his voice trembled and ceased, and silence endured for a short minute. Then he called his wife.

"Come here, Bell. Gie me a kiss, my bonny lass. I hae been an ill man to you."

"Na, na, Sandy. Ye hae aye been gude to me—better nor I deserved. Ye hae been naebody's enemy but yer ain."

"Haud yer tongue. Ye 're speykin' waur blethers nor the minister, honest man! I tell ye I hae been a damned scoon'el to ye. I haena even hauden my han's aff o' ye. And eh! ye war a bonny lass whan I merried ye. I hae blaudit (*spoiled*) ye a'thegither. But gin I war up, see gin I wadna gie ye a new goon, an' that wad be something to mak' ye like yersel' again. I'm affrontet wi' mysel', 'at I hae been sic a brute o' a man to ye. But ye maun forgie me noo, for I do believe i' my hert 'at the Lord 's forgien me. Gie me anither kiss, lass. God be praised, and mony thanks to you! Ye micht hae run awa' frae me lang or noo, an' a'body wad hae said ye did richt.—Robert, play a spring."

Absorbed in his own thoughts, Robert began to play the Ewie wi' the Crookit Horn.

"Hoots! hoots!" cried Sandy, angrily. "Nae mair o' that. I hae dune wi' that. What's i' the heid o' ye, man?"

"What 'll I play than, Sandy?" asked Robert, meekly.

"Play the Lan' o' the Leal, or My Nannie's awa', or something o' that kin'. I'll be leal to ye noo, Bell. An' we winna pree o' the whusky again, lass."

"I canna bide the smell o' t," cried Bell, sobbing.

Robert struck in with the Lan' o' the Leal. When he had finished it, he laid the fiddle in its place, said *good-night*, and departed—able just to see, by the light of the long-and-red-nosed dip, that Bell sat on the bedside holding the *rosely* hand of her husband, the rhinoceros-hide of which was yet delicate enough to let the love that went on stroking it through to his heart.

After this he never called his fiddle his *auld wife*.

Robert walked home with his head sunk on his breast. Dooble Sanny, the drinking, ranting, swearing soutar, was inside the wicket-gate; and he was left outside, for all his prayers, with the arrows from the castle of Beelzebub sticking in his back. He would have another try some day—but not yet—he dared not yet.

After this Robert had more to do in reading the New Testament than in playing the fiddle to the soutar, though they never parted without an air or two. Sandy continued hopeful and generally cheerful, with alternations, which always ended on the right side after the reading. Robert never attempted any comments, but left him to take from the word what nourishment he could find. But there was no return of strength to the helpless arm, which would not be moved even "like lifeless tools," and his constitution was gradually yielding.

The rumour got abroad that he was a "changed character,"—how is not far to seek, for Mr. MacCleary fancied himself the honoured instrument of his conversion, whereas the apoplexy and the New Testament were the chief agents, and even the violin had more share in it than the minister. But the man who does not believe that the spirit of God lies all about the spirit of man like a mighty sea, ready to rush in at the smallest chink in the walls of evil that shut him out from his own spaces, and that all good is his, may hold what theory he likes about means of betterment—I do not care what he thinks. I refer to the fact for the sake of explaining how it was that from that moment to the day of his death, the shoemaker had need of nothing. Nourishing food, wine, and many delicacies were sent him by good people of the town and neighbourhood, who, while they considered him outside of the kingdom, would certainly not have let him starve intentionally, but would have acknowledged no brotherhood, and used very few and small enticements to draw him within the gates thereof—so much the better for the soutar, perhaps; but now they were doing the best they could to send him back among the swine again—what with visits of condolence and flattery, inquiries into his experience, and long prayers by his bedside. The soutar's humour, however, aided by his violin, was a helpful antidote against these evil influences.



"ROBERT FALCONER."

"I doobt I'm gaein' to dee, Robert," he said one evening as the lad sat by his bedside.

"Weel, that winna do ye nae ill," said Robert, adding with just a touch of bitterness—"ye needna care aboot that."

"I do *not* care aboot the deein' o' 't. But I just want to live lang eneuch to lat the Lord ken 'at I'm in doonricht earnest aboot it. I hae nae chance o' drinkin' as lang 's I'm lyin' here."

"Never ye fash yer heid aboot that. Ye can lippen that to him, for it's his ain business. He'll see 'at ye're a' richt. Dinna ye think 'at he 'll lat ye aff."

"The Lord forbid!" responded the soutar, earnestly. "It' maun be a' pitten richt. It wad be dreidfu' to be latten aff. I wadna hae him content wi' cobbler's wark.—I hae 't," he resumed, after a few minutes' pause: "the Lord's easy pleased, but ill to saitisfee. I'm sair pleased wi' your playin', Robert, but it's naething like the richt thing yet. It does me gude to hear ye, for a' that."

One evening Robert found the shoemaker evidently sinking fast. He took the violin, and was about to play, but the soutar stretched out his one left hand, and took her from him. He laid her across his chest, and his arm over her, for a few moments, as if he were bidding her farewell, then held her out to Robert, saying—

"Hae, Robert. She's yours.—Death's a sair divorce.—Maybe they 'll hae an orra fiddle (*one more than is wanted*) whaur I'm gaein', though. Think o' a Rothieden soutar playin' afore his grace!"

Robert saw that his mind was wandering, and mingled the paltry honours of earth with the grand simplicities of heaven. He began to play the Land o' the Leal. For a little while Sandy seemed to follow and comprehend the tones, but by slow degrees the light departed out of his face, and at length his jaw fell, and with a sigh, the body parted from Dooble Sanny, and he went to God.

His wife closed the mouth—the eyes were closed already. Robert bade her good-night. With his violin in his hand, he walked home; and, with his violin still in his hand, walked into his grandmother's parlour.

"Hoo daur ye bring sic a thing into my hoose?" she said, roused by the apparent defiance of her grandson. "Hoo daur ye, efter what's come and gane?"

"'Cause Dooble Sanny's come and gane, grannie, and left naething but this ahint him. And this ane's mine, whaseever the ither micht be. His wife's left wi'oot a plack, an' I s' warran' the gude fowk o' Rothieden winna mak' sae muckle o' her noo 'at her man's awa'; for she never was sic a randy as he was, an' the triumph o' grace in her's but sma'. Sae I maun mak' the best o' this fiddle 'at I can for her. And, though ye think it richt to burn fiddles, ither fowk disna, and this has to do wi' ither fowk, grannie, an' no wi' you," Robert went on, fearful lest she might consider herself divinely commissioned to extirpate the whole race of stringed iustruments,—
"for I maun sell 't for her."

"Tak' it oot o' my sicht," said Mrs. Falconer, and said no more.

Robert carried the instrument up to his room, laid it on his bed, locked his door, put the key in his pocket, and descended to the parlour.

"He's deed, is he?" said his grandmother, as he re-entered.

"Ay is he, grannie," answered Robert. "He deid a repentant man."

"And a believin'?" asked Mrs. Falconer.

"Weel, grannie, I canna say 'at he believed a' thing 'at ever was, for a body michtna ken a' thing."

"Toots, laddie! Was 't savin' faith?"

"I dinna richtly ken what ye mean by that; but I'm thinkin' it was muckle the same kin' o' faith 'at the prodigal had; for they baith rase an' gaed hame."

"'Deed, maybe ye're richt, laddie," returned Mrs. Falconer, after a moment's thoughtfulness. "We'll houp the best."

All the rest of the evening she sat motionless, with her eyes fixed on the rug before her, thinking, no doubt, of the repentance and salvation of the fiddler, and what hope there might yet be for her own lost son.

The next day being Saturday, Robert set out for Bodyfauld, taking the violin with him. He went alone, for he was in no mood for Shargar's company. It was a fine spring day, the woods were budding, and the fragrance of the larches floated across his way. There was a lovely sadness in the sky, and in the motions of the air, and in the scent of the earth—as if they all knew that fine things were at hand which never could be so beautiful as those that had gone away. And Robert wondered how it was that everything should look so different. Even Bodyfauld seemed to have lost its enchantment, though his friends were as kind as ever. Mr. Lammie went into a rage at the story of the lost violin, and Miss Lammie cried from sympathy with Robert's distress at the fate of his bonny leddy. Then he came to the occasion of his visit, which was to beg Mr. Lammie, when next he went to Aberdeen, to take the soutar's fiddle, and get what he could for it, to help his widow.

"Poor Sanny!" said Robert; "it never cam' intil 's heid to sell her, nae mair nor gin she had been the auld wife 'at he ca'd her."

Mr. Lammie undertook the commission; and the next time he saw Robert, handed him ten pounds as the result of the negotiation. It was all Robert could do, however, to get the poor woman to take the money. She looked at it with repugnance, almost as if it had been the price of blood. But Robert having succeeded at length in overcoming her objections, she did take it, and with it provided Sandy's workshop with *sweeties*, and reels of cotton, and tobacco. In this way she certainly did not make money, for her anxiety to be honest rose to the absurd; but, through the kindness of the neighbours, who transferred part of their custom from the bigger shops, she contrived at least to live without being reduced to prey upon her own gingerbread and sweets.

CHAPTER IV.

ABERDEEN VIA BODYFAULD.

MISS ST. JOHN had first intentionally delayed, and then unintentionally procrastinated the proposal of a recommencement of Robert's lessons. But he was so much taken up with his dying friend that he had missed them far less than would otherwise have been the case. And Miss St. John had heard of his visits to the shoemaker, and judged that Robert's need was less than it had been. Meeting him, however, soon after Alexander's death, she introduced the subject, and Robert was enraptured at the idea of the reopening of the gates of paradise. If he did not inform his grandmother of the fact, neither did he attempt to conceal it; but she took no notice of it, thinking probably that the whole affair would be effectually disposed of by his departure. Till that period arrived, however, he had a lesson almost every evening, and Miss St. John was surprised to find how the boy had grown since the door was built up. Robert's gratitude grew into a kind of worship.

The evening before his departure for Bodyfauld, whence his grandmother had arranged that he should start for Aberdeen, in order that he might have the company of Mr. Lammie, whom business drew thither about the same time—as he was having his last lesson, Mrs. Forsyth left the room. Thereupon Robert, who had been dejected all day at the thought of leaving Miss St. John, found his heart beating so violently that he could hardly breathe. Probably she saw his emotion, for she put her hand on the keys, as if to show him how some movement was to be better effected. He seized her hand and lifted it to his lips. But when he found that instead of snatching it away, she yielded it, nay gently pressed it to his face, he burst into tears, and dropped on his knees, as if before a goddess.

"Hush, Robert! Don't be foolish," she said, quietly and tenderly. "Here is my aunt coming."

The same moment he was at the piano again, playing 'My Bonny Lady Ann,' so as to astonish Miss St. John, and himself as well. Then he rose, bade her a hasty good night, and hurried away.

Then a strange conflict began in his mind at the prospect of leaving the old place, on every house of whose streets, on every gray stone of whose surrounding hills, he left the clinging shadows of thought and feeling, where, although he knew it not, God had come near him, even in the sorrow in which he had concluded that he could not find him. A faintly purpled mist arose, which enwrapped all the past, changing even his grayest troubles into tales of fairyland, and his deepest griefs into songs of a sad music. Then he thought of Shargar, and what was to become of him after he was gone. The lad was paler and his eyes were redder than ever, for he had been weeping in secret. He went to his grandmother and begged that Shargar might accompany him to Bodyfauld.

"He maun bide at hame an' min' his beuks," said she; "for he winna hae them that muckle langer. He maun be doin' something for himsel'."

So the next morning the boys parted—Shargar to school, and Robert to

Bodyfauld—Shargar left behind with his desolation, his sun gone down in a west that was not even stormy, only gray and hopeless; and Robert moving towards an east which reflected, like a faint prophecy, a west tinged with love, death, and music, mingling them with its own saffron of coming dawn.

But when Robert reached Bodyfauld he marvelled to find that all its glory had returned. When he had greeted Miss Lammie, who was busy among the rich yellow pools in her dairy, he went out into the garden, now in the height of its summer. Great cabbage-roses hung heavy-headed splendours towards purple-black heartseases, and thin-filmed silvery pods of honesty; the tall white lilies mingled with the blossoms of the currant bushes, and at their feet the narcissi of old classic legend pressed their warm-hearted paleness into the plebeian thicket of the many-striped gardener's garters. His whole mind was flooded with a sense of glory. The farmer's neglected garden blossomed into higher glory in his soul. The bloom and the richness and the use were all there; but instead of each flower was a delicate ethereal sense or feeling about that flower. Of these feelings how gladly would he have gathered a posy from this his inner garden to offer to Miss St. John! but, alas! he was no poet; or rather he had but the half of the poet's inheritance—he could see: he could not say. But even if he had been full of poetic speech, he would yet have found that the half of his posy remained ungathered, for although we have speech enough now to be "cousin to the deed," as Chaucer says it must always be, we have not yet enough speech to be even cousin to the tenth part of our feelings. Let him who doubts recall one of his own vain attempts to convey that which made the oddest of dreams entrancing in loveliness—to convey that aroma of thought, the conscious absence of which made him a fool in his own eyes when he spoke such silly words as alone presented themselves for the service. I can no more describe the emotion aroused in my mind by a gray cloud parting over a gray stone, by the smell of a sweet-pea, by the sight of one of those long upright pennons of striped grass with the homely name, than I can tell what the glory of God is who made these things. The man whose poetry is like nature in this, that it produces individual, incommunicable moods and conditions of mind,—a sense of elevated, tender, marvellous, and evanescent existence, must be a poet. Every dawn of such a feeling is a light-brushed bubble rendering visible for a moment the dark unknown sea of our being which lies beyond the lights of our consciousness, and is the stuff and the region of our eternal growth. But think what language must become before it will tell dreams!—before it will convey the delicate shades of fancy that come and go in the brain of a child!—before it will let a man know wherein one face differed from another face in glory! I suspect, however, that for such purposes it is rather music than articulation that is needful—that, with a hope of these finer results, the language must rather be turned into music than extended logically.

The next morning he was awake at early dawn hearing the birds at his window. He rose and went out. The air was clear and fresh as a new-made soul. Bars of mottled cloud were bent across the eastern quarter of the sky, which lay like a great ethereal ocean ready for the launch of the ship of

glory that was now gliding towards its edge. Everything was waiting to conduct him across the far horizon to the south, where lay the stored-up wonder of his coming life. The lark sang of something greater than he could tell; the wind got up, whispered at it, and lay down to sleep again; the sun was at hand to bathe the world in the light and gladness alone fit to typify the radiance of Robert's thoughts. The clouds that formed the shore of the upper sea were already burning from saffron into gold. A moment more and the first insupportable sting of light would shoot from behind the edge of that low blue hill, and the first day of his new life would be begun. He watched, and it came. The well-spring of day, fresh and exuberant as if now first from the holy will of the Father of Lights, gushed into the basin of the world, and the world was more glad than tongue or pen can tell. The heart alone, filled with the supernal light, can surpass the marvel of such a sunrise.

And shall life itself be indeed less beautiful than one of its days? Do not believe it, young brother. Men call the shadow thrown upon the universe where their own dusky souls come between it and the sun, life, and then mourn that it should be less bright than the hopes of their childhood. Keep thou thy soul translucent, that thou mayest never see its shadow or at least never abuse thyself with the philosophy which calls that shadow human life. Or, rather would I say, become thou so pure in heart that thou shalt see God, for that vision alone is Life.

Just as the sun rushed up the horizon, he heard the tramp of a heavy horse in the yard, brought out to be put to the cart that was to carry his trunk to the turnpike road, three miles off, where the coach would pass. Then Miss Lammie came and called him to breakfast, and there sat the farmer in his Sunday suit of black, already busy. Robert was almost too happy to eat; yet he had not swallowed more than two mouthfuls before the sun rose unheeded, the lark sang unheeded, and the roses sparkled with the dew that bowed yet lower their heavy heads, all unheeded—till he had qualified himself for the active life of the day. By the time they had finished, Mr. Lammie's gig was at the door, and they mounted and followed the cart. Not even the recurring doubt and fear that hollowness was at the heart of it all, for that God could not mean such reinless gladness as that of this morning, prevented the truth of the present joy from sinking deep into the lad's heart. In his mind he saw a boat moored to a rock, with no one on board, heaving on the waters of a rising tide, and waiting to bear him out on the sea of the unknown. Only, alas! there was no paradise of the west in his imagination, as in that of a boy of the sixteenth century, to justify the picture constantly rising within him. Nevertheless the dew glittered as if it meant something; the sun shone as Robert had never seen him shine before; and the very mare that carried them along held her head up and stepped out as if there was no question about its being a very fine morning indeed. Had she too a future, poor old mare? Might there not be a paradise somewhere? and if in the furthest star instead of next-door America, why, so much the more might the Atlantis of the nineteenth century surpass *Manoa* the golden of the seventeenth!

The gig and the cart reached the road together. One of the men who had accompanied the cart took the gig; and Mr. Lammie and Robert were left on the road-side with a trunk and a box—the latter a present to Robert from Miss Lammie.

Their places had been secured, and the guard knew where he would have to take them up. Some minutes before the coach appeared, the notes of his horn, as like the colour of his red coat as the blindest of men could imagine, came echoing from the side of the heathery, stony hill under which they stood, so that Robert turned wondering, as if the chariot of his desires had been coming over the top of Drumsnaig, to carry him into the unknown region where labour was delight. But round the corner in front came the four-in-hand red mail instead. *She* pulled up gallantly; the wheelers lay on their hind quarters, and the leaders parted theirs from the pole; the boxes were hoisted up; Mr. Lammie climbed, and then Robert scrambled to his seat; the horn blew; the coachman spoke oracularly; the horses moved; and away went the gorgeous symbol of sovereignty careering through the submissive region. Nor did Robert's delight abate during the journey—certainly not when he saw the blue line of the sea in the distance, a marvel and yet a fact.

Mrs. Falconer had consulted the Misses Napier, who had many acquaintances in Aberdeen, as to a place proper for Robert and suitable to her means. Upon this point Miss Letty, not without a certain amount of design, as will appear in the course of my story, had been able to satisfy her. In a small house of two floors and a garret, in the old town, Mr. Lammie took leave of Robert.

It was from a garret window still, but a storm-window or dormer-window now, that Robert looked—eastward upon the sea—across fields, with here and there a house, and sand-hills, to the blue expanse of waters—not blue like southern seas, but slaty blue, like the eyes of northmen. It was rather dreary, he felt, and confessed to himself—perhaps all the more so that the same bright sun was shining, but now from overhead, casting short, unpicturesque shadows and much heat; that the dew was gone up and the lark had come down; that he was alone; that the end of his journey was come, and was not anything very remarkable. His landlady had waited upon him to know what he would have for dinner, and he had declined to use any discretion in the matter. He sat down upon his box, and his eye fell upon the other, a big wooden cube. Of its contents he knew nothing. He would amuse himself by making inquisition into it. So he borrowed a screwdriver and opened it. At the top lay a linen bag full of oatmeal; underneath that was a thick layer of oat cake; underneath that two cheeses, a pound of butter, and six pots of jam, which ought to have tasted of roses, for it came from the old garden where the roses lived in such sweet companionship with the currant bushes, lovely type of a commonwealth indeed, of the garden and kingdom of God; underneath that, &c.; and underneath &c. a box which strangely recalled Shargar's garret and one of the closets therein. With beating heart he opened it, and there, to his marvel and the restoration of all the fair day, was the violin which Dooble Sanny had left him when he forsook

her for—one of the queer instruments of Fra Angelico's angels, was it, reader?

In a flutter of delight he sat down on his box again and played the most mournful of tunes. Two white pigeons, which had been talking to each other in the heat on the roof, came one on each side of the window and peeped into the room; and out between them, as he played, Robert saw the sea and the blue sky above it. Is it any wonder that he could not, at least did not, forsake his fiddle for the lying pages and contorted sentences of the *Livy* which lay on the floor beside him, but forgot all about school, and college, and bursary, and went on playing till his landlady brought up his dinner, which he swallowed hastily that he might return to the spells of his enchantress.

CHAPTER V.

THE COMPETITION.

I COULD linger with gladness even over this part of my hero's history. If the school work was dry it was thorough. If that academy had no sweetly shadowing trees; if it did stand within a parallelogram of low stone walls, containing a roughly-gravelled court; if all the region about suggested hot stones and sand—beyond still was the sea and the sky; and that court, morning and afternoon, was filled with the shouts of eager boys, kicking the football with mad rushing to and fro, and sometimes with wounds and faintings—fit symbol of the equally resultless ambition with which many of them would follow the game of life in the years to come. Shock-headed Highland colts and rough Lowland steers as many of them were, out of that group, out of the roughest of them, would emerge in time a few gentlemen—not of the type of your trim, self-contained, clerical exquisite—but large-hearted, courteous gentlemen, for whom a man may thank God. And if the master was stern and hard, he was true; if the pupils feared him, they yet cared to please him; if there might be found not a few more widely-read scholars, it would be hard to find a better teacher.

Robert leaned to the collar and laboured, not greatly moved by ambition, but much by the hope of the bursary and the college life in the near distance. Not unfrequently he would rush into the thick of the football game, fight like a maniac for one short burst, and then retire and look on. He oftener regarded than mingled. He seldom joined his fellows after school hours, for his work lay both upon his conscience and his hopes; but if he formed no very deep friendships amongst them, at least he made no enemies, for he was not selfish, and in virtue of the Celtic blood in him was invariably courteous. His habits were in some things altogether irregular. He never went out for a walk; but sometimes, looking up from his *Cæsar* or his Latin version, and seeing the blue expanse in the distance breaking into white under the viewless wing of the summer wind, he would fling down his dictionary or his pen, rush from his garret, and fly in a straight line, like a sea-gull weary of lake and river, down to the waste shore of the great deep. And in the moods of such times he would always think of his lost kite, and for a moment

feel it once more tugging in his hand. But there were no Arabian nights of moon-blossomed marvel—only dry Aberdeen days of Latin and labour.

Slowly the hours went, and yet the dreaded, hoped-for day came quickly. The quadrangle of the stone-crowned college grew more awful in its silence and emptiness every time Robert passed it; and the professors' houses looked like the sentry-boxes of the angels of learning, soon to come forth and judge the poor mortals who dared to present a feeble claim to their recognition. October faded slowly by, with its keen fresh mornings and cold memorial green-horizoned evenings, whose stars fell like the stray blossoms of a more heavenly world, borne by some ghostly wind of space on its awful shoreless sweep. November came, "chill and drear," with its heartless, hopeless nothingness; but as if to mock the poor competitors, rose, after three days of Scotch mist, in a lovely "halcyon day" of "St. Martin's summer," through whose long shadows anxious young faces gathered to the quadrangle, or under the arcade, each with his Ainsworth's Dictionary, the sole book allowed, under his arm. But when the sacrist appeared and unlocked the public school, and the black-gowned professors walked into the room, and the door was left open for the candidates to follow, then indeed a great awe fell upon the assembly, and the lads crept into their places, most of them as if they were going to be tried for their life before a bench of the incorruptible. They took their places; a portion of Robertson's *History of Scotland* was given them to turn into Latin; and soon there was nothing to be heard in the assembly but the turning of the leaves of dictionaries, and the scratching of pens constructing the first rough copy of the Latinized theme.

It was done. Four weary hours, nearly five, some of which passed like minutes, others as if each of their minutes had been an hour, varying as he worked hard or contemplated vaguely, passed, and Robert in a kind of desperation, after a final reading of the Latin, gave in his paper, and left the room. When he got home, he asked his landlady to get him some tea. Till she got it he would play on his violin. But even the violin had grown dull, and would not speak freely. He took out his first copy, and went over it once more. Horror of horrors! he found a *maxie*—that is a *maximus error*. Mary Queen of Scots was left so far behind in the beginning of the paper, that she forgot the rights of her sex in the middle of it, and in the accusative of a future participle passive—I don't know what more modern grammarians call the growth—had submitted to be *dum*, and there was no use in the world making a *dam* of it now.

He rose, rushed out of the house, down through the garden, across two fields and the wide road, across the links, and so to the moaning lip of the sea—for it was moaning that night. Down the last bulwark of the sandhills, he dropt upon the wet sands, and there he paced up and down—how long, God only, who was watching him, knew—with the low limitless form of the murmuring lip lying out and out into the sinking sky like the life that lay low and hopeless before him, for the want at most of twenty pounds a year (for that was the highest bursary) to lift him into a region of possible well-being. Suddenly he began to look at himself, and speculate thus: "There's a sair bit in there," meaning in his own heart. "What's to be dune wi' 't? I

doobt it maun bide it. Weel, the crater had better bide it quaietly, and no cry oot. Lie doon, an' haud yer tongue. *Soror tua haud meretrix est*, ye brute!" He burst out laughing, after a somewhat doubtful and ululant fashion, it must be confessed; went home; took up his *auld wife*, and played Tullochgorum some fifty times over, with extemporized variations.

I must confess, that before he went to bed, he was as bad as ever.

The next day he had to translate a passage from Tacitus; after executing which somewhat heartlessly, he did not open a Latin book for a whole week. The very sight of one was disgusting to him. He wandered about the New Town, along Union Street, and up and down the stairs that led to the lower parts, haunted the quay, watched the vessels, learned their forms, their parts and capacities, made friends with a certain Dutch captain whom he heard playing the violin in his cabin, and on the whole, notwithstanding the wretched prospect before him, contrived to spend the week with considerable enjoyment. Nor does an occasional episode of *loafing* hurt a life with any true claims to the epic form.

The day of decision at length arrived. Again the black-robed powers assembled, and again the hoping, fearing lads—some of them not even lads, mere boys—gathered to hear their fate. Name after name was called out:—a twenty pound bursary to the first, one of seventeen to the next, three or four of fifteen and fourteen, and so on, for about twenty, and still no Robert Falconer. At last, lagging wearily in the rear, he heard his name, went up fistlessly, and was awarded five pounds. He crept home, wrote to his grandmother, and awaited her reply. It was not long in coming; for although the carrier was generally the medium of communication, Miss Letty had contrived to send the answer by the hand of a friend. It was to the effect that his grandmother was sorry he had not been more successful, but that Mr. Innes thought it would be quite worth while to try again, and he must therefore come home for another year.

This was mortifying enough, though not so bad as it might have been. Robert began to pack his box. Before he had finished it he was not far from crying. To meet Miss St. John again, thus disgraced, was more than he could bear; while if he remained he had a chance of winning prizes at the end of the session, which would quite repair his honour. The five pound bursars were privileged in paying half fees; and if he could only get some teaching, for which he would be paid at the rate of something under five-pence a lesson, he could manage. The difficulty was to find any one who would employ a *bejan* when a magistrand might be had at little more expense; and he had no one to recommend him. He thought of Dr. Anderson, left his box half packed, and rushed from the house without even knowing where he lived.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. ANDERSON AGAIN.

ON his way to the New Town, he resolved to inquire at the General Post Office. There he procured the desired information at once. Dr. Anderson lived in Union Street, towards the western end of it.

Away went Robert to find the house. That was easy. What a grand house of smooth granite and wide approach it seemed in his eyes! The door was opened by a man in livery, who looked at the country boy from head to foot—doubtfully.

"Is the doctor in?" asked Robert.

"Yes," answered the man.

"I wad like to see him," said Robert.

"Would you?" returned the man.

"I wad," said Robert.

"I'll go and see."

"Ye tellt me he was in already," said Robert.

The man smiled and stood aside. He was one of the class of old family servants, upright and true, of which I trust there are yet a few specimens left. Robert entered. The man dropped his English.

"Bide ye still there till I tell 'im. Fowk like him doesna like to hae fowk stridin' in upo' them ohn kent wha's comin'. They hae to gether their thochts, ye ken."

"That's a' in rizzon," returned Robert, and waited in the hall, which was covered with tiger and leopard skins, and had a bright fire burning in a large stove. The man returned presently, and led him through noiseless swing-doors covered with cloth into a large library. Never had Robert conceived such luxury. What with Turkey carpet, crimson curtains, easy chairs, grandly-bound books and morocco-covered writing table, it seemed the very ideal of comfort.

"Sit ye doon there," said the servant, "and the doctor 'll be wi' ye in ae minute."

He was hardly out of the room before a door opened in the middle of the books on one side, and the doctor appeared in a long dressing-gown of tarnished gold and crimson. He looked inquiringly at Robert for a moment, then made two long strides like a pair of eager compasses, holding out his hand.

"I'm Robert Faulkner," said the boy. "Ye'll min' maybe, Doctor, 'at ye war verra kin' to me ance, and tellt me lots o' stories—at Bodyfauld, ye ken."

"I'm very glad to see you, Robert," said Dr. Anderson. "Of course I remember you perfectly; but my servant forgot to ask your name, and you have grown so much that I did not know you just at once. I am very glad to see you," he repeated, shaking hands with him again. "When did you come to town?"

"I hae been at the grammer school i' the auld toon for the last three month," said Robert.

"Three months!" exclaimed Dr. Anderson. "And never came to see me till to-day! That was too bad of you, Robert."

"Weel, ye see, sir, I didna ken better. And I had a heap to do, and a' for naething, efter a'. But gin I had kent at ye wad hae likit to see me, I wad hae come to ye at ance."

"I have been away most of the summer," said the doctor; "but I have been home for the last month. You haven't had your dinner, have you?"

"Weel, I dinna exackly ken what to say, sir. Ye see, I wasna that sharp-set the day, sae I thought a mou'fu' o' breid and cheese wad do."

The doctor rang the bell, looking serious as he did so.

"That will never do," he said. "You must stop and dine with me. I dine at five. Johnston," he continued, as his servant entered, "tell the cook that I have a gentleman to dine with me to-day, and she must be rather more liberal than usual."

"Lordsake, sir!" said Robert, "dinna set the woman agen me."

He had no intention of saying anything humorous, but Dr. Anderson chose to regard his words in that light, and laughed heartily.

"Come into my room till the dinner is ready," he said, opening the door by which he had entered.

To Robert's astonishment, he found himself in a room bare as that of the poorest cottage. A small square window, small as the window in John Hewson's, looked out upon a garden neatly kept, but now "having no adorning but cleanliness." The place was as like the *benn end* of a cottage as it could be made. The walls were whitewashed, the ceiling was of bare boards, and the floor sprinkled with a little white sand. The table and chairs were of common deal, white and clean, save that the former was spotted with ink. A stronger contrast to the soft, large, richly-coloured room they had left could hardly be imagined. There were two or three small bookshelves on the wall, filled with old books. A fire blazed cheerily in the little grate. A bed with snow-white coverlet stood in a recess.

"This is the nicest room in the house, Robert," said the doctor. "When I was a student like you——"

Robert shook his head.

"I'm no student yet," he said.

But the doctor did not heed him. He went on:

"I had the *benn end* of my father's cottage to study in. And, my boy, my heart is sometimes sore yet with the gratitude I feel for that. My father respected the son for whose advantage he was working like a slave from morning to night—nay, my boy, he treated me like a stranger-gentleman when I came home from college; and, though he's been dead for thirty years—would you believe it, Robert?—well, I can't talk more about him now. I got this room made as like my father's *benn end* as I could, and I am happier here than anywhere else in the world."

By this time Robert was perfectly at home. Before the dinner was ready he had not only told Dr. Anderson his present difficulty, but his whole story as far back as he could remember. The good man listened almost eagerly, gazed at the boy with more and more of interest, which

deepened till his eyes glistened as he gazed, and when dinner was announced, rose without a word and led the way to the dining-room. Robert followed, and they sat down to a meal simple enough for such a house, but which to Robert seemed a feast followed by a banquet. For after they had done eating—on the doctor's part a very meagre performance—he told his servant to put the dessert in his room, and thither they retired. There Robert found the table covered with a snowy cloth, and wine and fruits arranged upon it.

It was far into the night before he rose to go home. As he passed through a thick rain of pin-point drops, he felt that every one of those cold granite houses ranged sepulchrally on each side with glimmering dead face was in reality a palace with a home for its central life. He was wet to the skin before he reached Mrs. Fyvie's in the *auld toon*, but was notwithstanding as warm as the under side of a bird's wing. For he had to sit down and write to his grandmother informing her that Dr. Anderson had employed him to copy for the printers a book of his upon the Medical Boards of India, and that as he was going to pay him for it at a rate which would secure him ten shillings a week, he thought it would be a pity to lose a year for the chance of getting a bursary next winter. The only doubt remaining to qualify his delight was whether his grandmother approved of Dr. Anderson sufficiently to allow him to avail himself of his offer.

This offer was a *bonâ fide* one, in as far as the doctor did want the manuscript copied, though he would, in real truth, rather have done it himself. But he knew that the only way to get a chance of Mrs. Falconer's consent was to set the whole thing forth as a business arrangement, and as such he allowed Robert for the present to regard it. He wrote that very night to Mrs. Falconer himself, and after mentioning the unexpected pleasure of Robert's visit, not only told her the advantage to himself of the arrangement he had proposed, but the greater advantage to Robert, inasmuch as he would then be able in some measure to keep a hold of him. He judged that although Mrs. Falconer had no great opinion of his religion, she would yet consider his influence rather on the side of good than otherwise in the case of a boy abandoned to his own resources.

The end of it all was that his grandmother yielded, and Robert was straightway a Bejan, or Yellow-beak.

Three days had he been clothed in the red gown of the Aberdeen student, and had attended the humanity and Greek class-rooms. He was seated on the evening of the third day preparing his Virgil for the next. But he found himself growing weary over it, and no wonder, for, except the walk of a few hundred yards to and from the college, he had had no open air for those three days. It was raining in a persistent November fashion, and he felt that far away through the dark and the rain the sea was tossing uneasily. Should he go out? Should he remain at home? He sat for a minute,

This way and that dividing the swift mind,*

* Tennyson's *Morte d'Arthur*.

Atque animum nunc huc celerem, nunc dividit illuc.

Æneid: IV.

when his eye fell on his violin. He had been so full of his new position and its requirements, that he had not, strange to say, even touched it since the session opened. Now it was just what he wanted. He caught it up eagerly, and began to play. The power of the music seized upon him. He played on and on till a string broke. Without thinking of the rain or the two miles of darkness to be traversed before he could find a music-shop, he caught up his cap, and went to rush from the house. But he got no farther than the door of the room.

This opened immediately on the stair, with only the breadth of one step between the threshold and its descent. But there was a door opposite, notwithstanding, to which a few steps led that diverged from the stair a little lower down. So near were the doors that one might stride across the fork of the stair from the one to the other. The opposite door was open, and in it stood Eric Ericson.



DOWN BY THE DOCKS.

IN spite of the lavish display of Mosaic brass and glass in the famous Temple of Tailordom at the corner, the Minories, to most people, doubtless, seems anything but a cheerful thoroughfare. It is tolerably wide (for a London street), but it is also very muddy. The houses are sulkily sombre, meanly melancholy; the cabs are more battered and bespattered, the cab-horses more broken-kneed and broken-winded, and the cabmen more seedy and sodden, than can be found almost anywhere else even in this execrably cabbed metropolis. Nor do the ever-rumbling trains, and the shabby railway-bridge that spans it add to the road's liveliness. Yet, notwithstanding this, I often find myself turning down the Minories with a feeling of relief. Purely City bustle may for a time be very exciting to a spectator, but, so far as mere spectators are concerned, it soon grows wearisome. There is so much outward sameness in it. Day after day, week after week, month after month, the whirring wheel whirls round—deafening and dulling. Like Horatio, I have a truant disposition, and love to be reminded of the far-off lands from which the City draws its wealth. To my ill-regulated, gipsy mind, a rollicking sailor is a far pleasanter sight than a Rothschild. I spent my boyhood by the sea; I have often lived beside it since; and many a sunny and many a stormy day, many a moonlit and many a murky night, I have been borne on its bosom, in almost every zone. I miss the magic modulations of its mighty voice, its moaning music, its majestic thunder; and delight in mariners, the smell of tar, fluttering bunting, cat's-cradle cordage, raking spars, rusty cables, and salt-candied bulwarks, because they seem to bring me messages from my absent Friend.

Get out of a "True Blue" omnibus at Aldgate Church, and turn down the Minories, and if you are a person of "a fanciful mind" the air will at once appear to smell of salt and seaweed. At that corner the ever-varying sea-going element of London's population begins to colour clearly, and the

deeper as you wander eastward, the stay-at-home mass, with which it mingles, ebbing and flowing ceaselessly within narrow limits. Bronze-faced men roll past you with a frank, fearless, jolly, everywhere-a-stranger-everywhere-at-home expression. They are variously, and for most part, loosely clad—in forecastle canvas, flannel, duck, dungaree, and dreadnought, or elaborately got up in gold bands and gold chains, Crimean and regatta shirts, black satin waistcoats, and superfine broadcloth of plum-like hue and bloom. There is a holiday look in those faces which is most refreshing as contrasted with the anxious hurry of the throng of landmen which they spangle. The sailor's work, for the time, is done. Few landmen have to do work so hard whilst it lasts, but it is done; and the sailor has leisure to look about him, and enjoy his spell on shore as heedless both of the past and the future as a child. It would be well for him if there were more childlike innocence in his enjoyments, but a good many of them are childlike enough. They are not all gross, and, when Jack does offend, we should remember that landmen, with not half his temptations, are often far grosser in their pleasures. Somehow, too, there seems to be a moral corning power in sea-salt: the seaman's general character is not nearly so much vitiated by excess as the landsman's. Sad scamps a good many of our tars may be when ashore, and not very immaculate afloat; but still they preserve their reverence for some of the manly virtues, and not unfrequently exhibit them in a way which landmen call "heroic," and write poems about; but which to *them* seems as much a matter of course as cracking a biscuit or going aft for grog. I am not justifying Jack's skylarking when it results in riotous living: I like him far too well for that, and from the bottom of my heart I honour those who would make him wise in port, at the same time leaving him freedom to be merry. All that I mean to say is, that so far as my experience goes, peccant Jack, even at his worst, never becomes so despicably, desperately bad, as the out-and-out land scoundrel. He will stand up for women and children and weak folk, and do his best to secure fair play, according to his lights, for most people. I speak of British sailors before the mast, when most depraved. Does a thorough-paced shore-going rascal retain any respect for women, children, weak folk, or fair play of any kind? Get into a crowd largely leavened with London roughs, and don't you wonder why Englishmen are so proud of the mere fact of being English-born?

Faces free from care are so rare a sight in London streets that I do not choose to speculate as to the percentage of those I meet in my dock-ward rambles which will present themselves at the Thames Police Court, next morning, with bloodshot or blackened eyes. It is such a treat to fall in with people who are not forced to "drive," and who laugh with all their lungs without the slightest fear of attracting contemptuous attention. Some of the masters have a look quite as *déagé* as the men's; and even those, most readily distinguishable, who are bound for their owners' or agents' offices, have a business aspect quite different from the landsman's. His is worn all day long, and only slipped a little aside when he gets home at night: the sailor's is assumed only for an hour or two; and although, owing to its unwontedness, it is more intense than the Cockney's customary look of care, you can detect

a jolly face beneath the thin mask of temporary puzzlement and pompous responsibility. He knows that he will soon get his business "off his mind : " the City man looks collar-galled even at church.

As you walk down the Minories, nautical instruments and navigation books begin to show themselves in the shop-windows. At the bottom, mariners and marine signs thicken. Go a little way to the right, and you can see, above the green or black trees of Trinity Square, the gray façade of the Trinity House, suggestive of lonely lights on billow-beaten rocks and headlands—of lower, still more lonely-looking, floating lights, moored in the midst of waters turbidly tawny with ever-troubled sand. In front is the grey Tower, keeping unwearied watch beside the river on which only coracles and wild-fowl paddled, but which has since borne so many generation of craft, ever increasing in size and numbers. On the unpaved open space in Postern Row, ship-placards, gay with red, white, and blue, and embellished with cuts of clippers on the berth for America and Australia, lean back to back in pairs. Over the door of the Naval Depôt on Tower Hill, beside which lounges a brawny, bushy-bearded quartermaster, a Union Jack, that seems to have for many a year braved the breeze, droops its faded and somewhat tattered folds. A diminutive sailor, strolling City-wards, has let his pipe go out, and, with the greatest nonchalance, staggers up to one of the stately Mint sentries to demand a light. The bear-skinned, bayonet-bearing giant at first looks somewhat incensed at being stopped so unceremoniously in his solemn tramp ; but good-nature triumphs. He beckons, and an unhelmeted comrade issues from the guard-room, pipe in mouth. The second giant bends almost double to accommodate himself to the stature of the dwarf ; the soldier and sailor pull and puff in harmony ; and presently, with a hearty "thanky, mate," and an accepted proffer of the butt-end of a fig of negro-head, the little man goes on his way in peace. The cloud he blows looks silvery compared with the dark vapour that is stealing from the Mint's "long clay ;" but gold is simmering where *that* smoke comes from. The house-flag of the ship that brought it from Hobson's Bay is fluttering above the dead wall of the docks yonder. A strange contrast to the hidden treasures of the Royal Mint is presented by the patent squalor of the street to which it gives its name ; and is there not something startling in this crowd of filthy, tattered, hungry wretchedness, clustered in half-hopeless quest of work, at the gate of docks within which wealth from every quarter of the globe is literally overflowing the warehouses, bursting bales and boxes, and leaking out of barrels in insulting plethora ? Miserable bees with nothing to do ! And if they could get any honey to carry, how little of it would fall to their own share ! It is not easy to answer the political economist's arguments about supply and demand, and the folly of trying to raise artificially the price of labour. Nevertheless, when I see those wretched would-be dock labourers, whose only service is a dreary standing and waiting, I cannot help asking myself—is it *right* that a wealthy nation should have subjects so miserably poor ? If she cannot employ them in a way that would win for them the necessities and the common decencies of life, ought she to keep them at home ? Ought she not to send them to one or other of the many

places in this still thinly-peopled earth, in which their labour would enable them to lead the lives of men? English wages of course would rise if the English labour-market were less crowded; but are cheap production and distribution overriding duties—duties, at all—when the cheapness is so dear to thousands of our countryfolk? The comparatively poor, no doubt, we must have always with us; but is not our chronic pauperism a scandal—a sin for which some *men* must be responsible? It sounds to me like blasphemy to attribute such a state of things to the immutable decree of Heaven.

There is a good deal in this dock region to diminish the feeling of relief I spoke of as coming over me when I drew near it. Thousands on very low rungs of the social scale would think hell had begun on earth if they were compelled to live a month in some of its littered, loathsome courts and lanes; where freshness in no form ever comes; where even the rare sunlight falls defiled. And then, after a month's time, they would begin, like thousands before them, to get used to their surroundings. Is not that a sadder thought still? How the commonest sensibilities must have been dulled, how commonest respect for cleanliness must have vanished, before people could resign themselves to continued existence in such rat-runs, reeking with moral and material filth. The depressed creature on the point of being acclimatised to this dolorous land is one of the most depressing of spectacles. With ropes to steal, and muddy water in abundance to plunge into without trouble, it seems strange that he does not save himself by suicide from ever passing that point. I saw the other day a young countrywoman who had just reached the point of which I speak. I know very well that peasants are not the innocents writers of modern idylls have pictured them. Writers of ancient idylls have painted the coarseness of the class, with far more truth. Still this poor creature looked as if, not very long ago, she had really been an unsophisticated, merry lass, "in maiden meditation fancy free." Some trace of the kiss of the country, so to speak, still lingered on her pinched, fast-paling cheek. She came out of a pawnbroker's side-passage as if the place were not unfamiliar to her; but she still *stole* out of it with drooping eyes, and hurried to her den of a "home" in the ditch-like side-street, up which she turned without a word of reply to the sickening ribaldry of the knot of unsexed women congregated at the corner. I could not help thinking that ere long she might be bandying foul jests with them, and giving worse, perhaps, than she got. I felt very sorry for the sinking young countrywoman. Pity is cheap, but though you may not be able to give anything else, I am not aware that it is a virtue, as some seem to think, not even to give that. And what a cruel mockery the names of some of the streets in the dock region must seem to rustics who have drifted into it, and settled down like dregs—Nightingale Lane, Rosemary Lane, Juniper Row, Elm Place, and such-like; but, doubtless, they are far beneath the reach of "sentimental" sorrows. Women of the kind that hooted after the young, suddenly-aged creature slinking to her lair, are a hideously common sight in the dock region. Immodestly tricked out in tawdry finery, with painted faces, and often with "painted" eyes, for the most part ugly with the ugliness of the lowest sin, they flaunt their drunken shame in broad daylight. Shops of the kind from which the country girl

hurried are another horrible element in the dock region. Under any circumstances a pawnbroker's shop-front is a depressing sight. Those tea-pots, spoons, hearthrugs, flutes, family Bibles, workboxes, wedding rings, christening corals, and what not—once fondly cherished property, and property which the owners, when they pledged it, never *meant* to part with—exposed for any one to claim who can pay the ticketed price, are to me a very gloomy show of goods. I have no doubt there are hundreds of honest pawnbrokers, but I should not like to be a pawnbroker. I should be haunted by the histories in my shop; should feel ogreish—as if I picked my meat off starved men's bones. The saddest of family histories may be read in the motley contents of the dock region pawnbrokers' windows—you seem to see the miserable little rope, that was the sole support, parting strand by strand. You can find in those windows, also, doleful hints of strangers from all parts of the world left in London—alone. The mind cannot picture a more crushing solitude than theirs. *Magna civitas, magna solitudo*, is true, indeed, to the friendless man in London. As far as numbers go, to be sure, he has plenty of company, but so has a corpse in a crowded churchyard. The corpse, however, has the advantage of not being conscious of the unsympathising silence of his surroundings, and if he were conscious, he could comfort himself with the thought that, after all, they were corpses, too; whereas the lonely man in London is constantly tantalised by the sight of common interests from which he is shut out.

Who would think of there being a "Ladies' School" in the main thoroughfare that is the string of the Wapping and Shadwell river bow? But there *is*: held in what used to be a "doctor's shop;" the young ladies, I suppose, being assembled in the side on which the shutters are put up and the gas turned on. Strolling Jacks flatten their noses against the glass door and the unshuttered window. They congregate in the same childlike fashion before a shop in which a long rank of pallid cork-cutters—packed so closely that you marvel that their elbows do not clash at every swing, with consequent unpleasant tingling of "funny bones"—are slicing away assiduously, ever and anon looking up to grin at the admiring observation which their monotonous labours attract. There is a very great deal of the child in Jack. Here he is staring like a child at a row of tumble-down, beetle-browed, tenantless houses, with rusty paint-blisters on their cracked, dusty, mud-splashed shutters, and padlocks on their doors, as if 1665 and the plague had come again. With a child's glee at doing what it has no business to do, or the half-expectancy of rousing "the ghost," he raises the grating knockers, or tugs at the bell-pulls which return no tinkle. Like a child he fondles and purchases the toy-watches, kettle-holders, blue-and-gold butterflies dangling from elastic, and other useless articles which the street-vendors force upon his notice. He falls an easy prey to the shabby East End photographers' shabbier touts. They allow landsman after landsman to pass by without a single gleam in their watery eyes or greasy smirk of their mangy moustaches, but instantly pounce upon the sailors, and convey them upstairs in detachments of half a dozen. The pistol and rifle galleries, open to the street, with battered targets blinking at the darksome other end like damaged eyes, are irresistible temptations to

Jack. In he must turn to try his luck. If he would only be a little less fond of entering the less innocent saloons, into which he is lured by painted men-of-war's men proffering pots of porter blossoming like hawthorn bushes, and painted female pirates that have worse than a wooden no-care for him in their invitations! Even in his weaknesses, however, the genial character of the man shines out. Jack must stand treat. Here comes a little mob of steerage passengers who made the voyage with him—looking very woe-begone and astray now they have reached the port for which they longed; and Jack, who has got a week's worth of his three months' wages left, instantly hauls the whole party through the finger-rubbed swing-doors of the Admiral Benbow, to cheer up their hearts with "glasses round."

All the sailors who roll along Ratcliff Highway have *not* a genial look. There are poor shivering Chinamen, who seem to be suffering from blended ague and jaundice; wicked-eyed Lascars, that have lost their litheness, and make you think of semi-torpid snakes; spare, lanthorn-jawed, sullen Yankee sailors, in red shirts and "goatee" beards, whose notion of fair play in a tussle includes "booting" and "gouging." And there are also swarthy, fiery-eyed, ringleted and ear-ringed mariners of southern Europe, who would put a knife into you if you trod upon their toes, and whom somehow you cannot see without fancying, however unjustly, that they have assisted more than once in their lifetime at the ceremony of "walking the plank." The negro sailor is generally a jolly-looking fellow ashore. On he comes, jabbering to himself, or singing a ditty, perhaps one of the peculiar spiritual songs of his peculiar people; and irradiating the pathway, the cloudy heavens, the shop-windows, the lamp-posts, and all passers-by, most impartially, with a broad grin of complete satisfaction with himself, everybody, and everything. Sometimes, however, you encounter a very surly negro sailor—a sable giant, who has discovered that he can thrash most white men, and is very fond of seeking opportunities for the display of his pugilistic prowess. All kinds of sailors, nevertheless, give a pleasant fillip to the truant mind weary of mere Cockney bustle. They have come from all parts of the world, they are going to all parts of the world, and the truant mind in a few minutes vaguely performs all their voyages. In spite of its malodours, again, there are pleasantly suggestive scents in the dock region besides the prevalent wholesome scent of tar; saccharine scents, aromatic scents—the spices of the East are passing you in those commonplace waggons. There are shops, too, agleam with shells fished up from tropic seas. In this one the crimson poll of an Australian king parrot nods above a trayful of tortoises brought from Algiers as ballast: in that a Brazilian spider-monkey is assiduously scratching an Alpine marmot—whilst a silver pheasant watches the operation with calm aristocratic contempt. There are traditions that in the back yards behind these naturalists' shops lions and tigers are sometimes confined. I know not how this may be, but I know that, stepping into the shop of a dock region barber, newsvendor, and tobacconist, to purchase a box of Vesuvians, I saw in the shaving room three young bears in cages. They were routing and growling in their straw, as if they were saying, like the little bear in the nursery story, "Who's been lying on my bed?"

There are other shops which are of great interest to me down by the docks; the shipchandlers, that will supply a ship with anything; the shops that make a *spécialité* of lamps—binnacle lamps, cabin lamps, "larboard" lamps, "starboard" lamps; the shops that glitter with compasses, sextants, telescopes, speaking trumpets, and barometers; and beside which, not miniatures such as you see in the City, but full-sized wooden naval officers—indeed, rather larger than life—are taking observations unceasingly by night and day, with eyes from which the rain has washed the iris; the shops that are almost filled with a couple of ships' wheels, half a dozen mighty blocks, and a cheese-shaped sample of hawser curled in Python coils; the slop-sellers' shops, where yellow oilskins, striped guernseys, check shirts, and blue pea-jackets and watch-coats, capped with low-crowned hats and sou'-westers, sway in the wind, like mariners who have hanged themselves through grief at the loss of their legs; where cavernous boots, made apparently of unpolishable rhinoceros hide, and beds and bolsters with gorgeously flowered ticks for fo'c'stle bunks, and pannikins that gleam like silver, are arranged to tempt the eye of the outward bound. There may not at first sight seem much in such articles; but when you think of the seas that will wash over them, of the sunlight, the moonlight, and the starlight that will rain down upon them, of the Arctic cold and the torrid heat, of the chances and changes of all kinds they will undergo, before many months have passed, all over the world, their commonplace look vanishes. I eye that pink and white comforter with respect, because a brave fellow may have it round his throat when coming round the Horn, or reefing in "the roaring forties;" and that pair of low-waisted canvas trousers ceases to be a mere vulgar pair of breeches when I call to mind that they may be all the wearer will have left to shiver in, when washed up, bruised, bloody, and half stunned, on a ledge of the Sydney Gap, the sole survivor of a wreck.

Notwithstanding its mud and its misery, I can find pleasure in a stroll through the dock region. I like its ugly churches, with their ever-standing flag-staves, ever-rove flag-halyards, and more frequently than on other churches, fluttering flags. I like its miry drawbridges; its pea-soupy canals; its little basins, in which big ships lie with seemingly as small chance of ever getting out again as corks that have dropped inside their bottles; its figure-heads peering over dead walls into parlours; and its jib-booms, although run in, threatening to impale bedroom windows. Still I cannot help wondering why Jack, when paid off, affects the place so much. *He* does not want to be reminded of the sea, and yet he haunts the dock region as persistently as players on the nights they do not play take their seats "in the front," where they are the most interested of the audience. With the exception of those who go into "homes," it is small comfort sailors enjoy in their London boarding-houses. A glimpse of the interior of some of these—and far from the worst, most probably—you can get as you walk along Ratcliff Highway. There is a knot of sailors yarning at the door of a dingy house; the door opens into a dingy, uncarpeted room, hung round with cheap, dirty prints; men are seated, smoking, and yarning, and drinking, as thick as they can sit, on the hard, narrow benches that run round the room close to the wall; men

yarning, and smoking, and drinking, are clustered about the fireplace or the stove. When I think of the work Jack does, and of the little he gets for it, either in pay or in pleasure, I am not disposed to be stern in my judgment on his mistakes as to the true nature of pleasure; and I feel ashamed of the morbid whimperings at fate in which I and other landsmen are apt to indulge when I witness his philosophic cheerfulness. Jack accepts his lot, does his work, enjoys himself after his fashion when his work is done; and then, when his brief holiday is over, goes manfully to his hard work again.

It was only last week I saw an almost "cleaned out" sailor in High Street, Shadwell, bound for his ship, with a porter behind him carrying his chest. (So long as Jack has anything left in his purse, Jack likes to be a "swell.") My Jack treated his man more than once on his way to the river, and when he reached the stairs gave him a good deal more than a literal swell would have given him for a similar service; but the land-shark was not satisfied. He told a piteous story about his wife and family. If he had a wife and family, I have no doubt he thrashed and starved them; but Jack's heart was touched, and his albatross pouch was emptied of a good moiety of the scanty remnants of the proceeds of his rapaciously-discounted advance-note; the receipt of which the *bénéficiaire* acknowledged, when his benefactor's back was turned, with an ungratefully-contemptuous grin. I know there is no real merit in thoughtless, semi-maudlin liberality of this kind; but then a good many people's thoughtlessness and insobriety, and some people's thoughtfulness and sobriety, take turns so very different, that I was weak enough to find another reason in this folly for liking Jack. Poor fellow! I pitied him, too, handed over by a land sharper to amphibious sharpers, who, though only fresh-water sailors, ought to have, at least, some little fellow-feeling with, and compassion on, him. I knew, of course, that the boatmen would get the last tuft of wool off my Jack's already well-shorn skin. They pulled back to the stairs, grinning like the porter, and went with him into a public-house to liquidate a portion of their ill-gotten gains. It was with a feeling of satisfaction that I watched Jack duck his head and enter the topgallant forecabin. In spite of the hard work and hard living, Jack at present is best aboard. My wish for him is that he could look better after himself ashore, and had far fewer, or far more of an opposite sort, to look after him.

RICHARD ROWE.



THE DOOM OF THE PRYNNES.

PART III.

I THINK some strength died out of Mark that night,
 A certain patience grew on him from then;
 And quietness, like the calm of dying men.
 His journey was delayed from day to day,
 The mother died, all suddenly, at last;
 He, only, being with her, and some said
 He murdered her; so wicked is the world!
 He needs must stay to face the slander down,
 Though we, who loved him, cared about it least,
 Until I said one eve, "Why, Mark, your hand
 Grows thin and pale, and, held up so, looks like
 An alabaster shade before a lamp."

Agnes was painting, but she raised her head,
 And turned on him her tender, lustrous eyes
 With gaze of woful pity, love, and pain.
 He smiled at her as though she reached his wound
 And touched it with a touch of anodyne;
 As being healed, he smiled again, and said,
 "Sweetheart, you have not sung to me so long;
 They say frogs croak to pique the nightingales
 Into melodic contest; thus croak I:—

A NIGHT-WATCH.

"Woe is my mother that reared me, for I am a man of strife,
 I have not hated my neighbour, and yet he would seek my life.
 Prophets that prophesy smooth things, to them shall the smooth things come;
 Better than coal from the altar it is that a man be dumb.
 Wake her not up, my beloved; fan her with breeze of myrrh.

Happiness is not the one thing a man should essay to gain,
 So I have said with the others, when I had but medium pain.
 Some of the planets, it may be, have air that is pure and best,
 He who should set out to reach them would need on the way to rest.
 Wake her not up, my beloved. Strange! that she does not stir.

Heroes exult in the conflict, and madmen rush forth and die.
 Neither a hero nor madman, alas for my state, am I;
 Something of clearness of vision doth dawn on my eyes from far,
 Nothing of clearness of action agrees with the things that are.
 Wake her not up, my beloved; pillow the dainty head.

Life, with its broken endeavours, seems sometimes like rotten fruit,
 Only the worse for the sunshine of heaven that does not suit;
 Plant-like, we need lie in darkness before we translated be,
 Hades must rest us for ages ere we shall the glory see.
 Wake her not up, my beloved. Merciful God! she is dead."

"Mark, you are ill," said Agnes, suddenly.
 He answered low, "No, dear, a little tired,
 As a tired child will lean its head against
 Its mother's hand, not all for weariness."

Like two pure souls that on their way to earth
 Had met in vacuous space and recognized
 Their kinship with a mystic deep delight
 And silence eloquent, so these two pierced
 Into the spirit depths of either heart,
 With solemn joy, and wonderment, and peace,
 Unsatisfied with sight, yet gazing still;
 Until a sudden shadow dimmed Mark's eyes.

And Agnes, reading it, saw what he feared
 For her, and in her, and she shrank, like one
 All wrongfully accused of leprosy,
 Half angered and half sad.
 I, sorely pressed with pain, sang hurriedly
 A baby song which she had taught to me:—

"All the little flowers lie dead, dead,
 All the little flowers lie dead;
 For the Frost-king came, and he knew no shame,
 And all the little flowers lie dead.

All the little birds lie dead, dead,
 All the little birds lie dead;
 For the Man-king came, and he called them game,
 And all the little birds lie dead.

All the little stars are dead, dead,
 All the little stars are dead;
 For the Sun-king came, with his daylight flame,
 And all the little stars are dead."

"A foolish song, but you have Agnes' voice,"
 Mark said, and then he drew my lips to his.
 Beneath the touch my sleeping woman's soul
 Was troubled into life, and I recoiled.

"What is it?" Agnes asked. Mark only smiled:
 "The child is pettish, Sweet, like all her race;
 We have our special weaknesses, we Prynnes,
 Our angers, fantasies, and ghostly fears;
 No Saxon courage of tenacity,
 We spring, and rush, and suddenly fall back:
 Sometimes I almost hate to be a Prynnne."

"Is that, then, us?" I said, amazed, ashamed;
But Agnes laid her cheek upon my hair,
'Neath her caress I grew a child again.

All this while

A ceaseless moaning had gone round the house,
A sighing like the sighing of the sea.
A distant gale, Mark said; but as he spoke
It neared, and crashed against the window-frames,
Like some poor mendicant, as Agnes said,
Who fails, with famished voice, to make men hear
Until, Death-driven, he leaps boldly up
And batters at the door.

Suddenly from the wall a picture sprang,
And fell at Agnes' feet; she smiled, "Poor nun,
I think we will not hang her any more."
Then told me the tradition, how 'twas said
That this had been a weak and foolish Prynnne,
Who took the veil, repented it, and died.

"The storm has passed," Mark said, "'twas strangely short.
Listen, how still it is, for you to sing
The plaint I heard at dusk, dear, yester-eve,—
Your last new song."

"My last song, yes," and Agnes smiled again,
Her danger smile, that strangely thrilled one's soul,
As when a sudden rift in stormy clouds
Shows the blue ether in unearthly calm.

"I think we have not been impatient, Lord,
We know Thou lovest us, and we love Thee
We hold up chainèd hands before Thee, Lord,
And only wonder when they will be free.

A little happiness, good Lord, dear Lord,
If only for a moment ere we die;
Life is so short, yet seems so long with pain,
'A moment's bliss' is all our longing cry——"

She ceased, with catching breath, and cried, "The tree!"
Before the house there stood a mountain ash,
Which some far-distant Prynnne had brought to share
The changes in the family estate.
Though bent and scarred with age and evil times,
It still upreared its wand-like spears of leaves,
That shimmered silver in the fitful light.

The storm, returning, had seized hold of this,
'Twas bowed and quivering like a foundering ship,
With mutinous leaves, that whispered, cheek on cheek,
How they would help the wrecking wind this night.

E'en as we looked 'twas done, the old tree fell,
 Shaking the near foundations of the house,
 Till little smoke-like cones of dust arose,
 And then the floor curved upward, so it seemed,
 Towards the ceiling, that, on swaying walls,
 Went round and round.
 "Love!" "Love!" my cousins cried, with outstretched arms,
 And flowed together, like two parted streams
 Long sundered meeting, meeting at the sea.
 Then all was dark.

When I at length awoke
 I heard my father and his brother call,
 "The microscope!—the telescope!—the child!"
 And thought of how 'tis said, old men and babes
 Bear anything.

Stung into sudden life by dread, I rose,
 And found my cousins 'neath a fallen beam,
 That falling, sheltered them from all but death;
 Crowned with the roses from the broken vase,
 They lay, a sleeping king and queen, at rest.

Her face upturned to his lay on his breast,
 Like, but more blessed than, a child asleep,
 While his, with smiling lips, bent over her,
 As though he shielded her from dazzling light;
 The light of joy that in their faces shone,
 The joy of those for whom all life and love,
 Condensed into one nectar drop of dew,
 Exhaled to Heaven, ere it touched the dust.
 I pray I may not see such light again
 Until mine eyes have gained immortal strength.

Veiling my face within my trembling hands,
 I groped my way out to the darkened world,
 And, dull with sorrow, murmured Agnes' prayer:
 "A moment's bliss, dear Lord, before we die."

S. A. D. I.



TOMASO AND PEPINA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DOCTOR AUSTIN'S GUESTS."

ON a small farm in the Bresciano lived an old working couple, Tomaso and Pepina. They were frugal, industrious, and pious. The few inhabitants of the secluded village in which they resided much respected them; but beyond it they were unknown. Besides their other good qualities, they were very much attached to each other; and both being by nature amicably disposed, their lives had passed very happily in each other's society. Though not poor, they were far from being rich, yet they did not envy their richer neighbours, but were content with what God had given them. They had but one cause for anxiety. The little farm on which they lived was not their own; and the landlord had frequently spoken of dispossessing them, in order to add the land to his own farm. But something or other had always turned up to induce him to delay carrying his idea into practice, prior to the date of our narrative, when they received a peremptory notice to quit within the space of a week.

By a singular coincidence, on the same day they received this order, intelligence reached them that a cousin of Tomaso's, an old bachelor, who resided near Menagio, and whom he had not seen for more than thirty years, was dead, and had left Tomaso his farm, with the house and furniture. The worthy couple, late in life though it was for them to remove to a new dwelling, determined to go and reside in it. Many long and anxious debates took place, however, before they came to this resolution. Their principal objection was that they were not acquainted with any one in the neighbourhood of the new dwelling, and that they should leave behind them friends whom they loved and respected. They had but one alternative, however—they must remove, or starve; and they chose the former, sorely as it grieved them to do so. As they had heard on good authority that the house left them was amply furnished, they sold all they had in their old dwelling with the exception of a modest stock of clothing, which could be tied up in a bundle. After a painful leave-taking with their friends, they engaged the driver of a cart, who was returning to Lecco, to carry them on their journey as far as that, as they intended to make that town their first halting place.

For some time after they had quitted the village both husband and wife gave full vent to their tears; while the driver of the cart, prompted by a feeling of delicacy, pretended not to see them, but walked quietly beside his horse's head, looking straight along the road before him. After they had been about an hour on their journey, Tomaso said to his wife—

"It's very hard for people at our time of life to be turned out of house and home at a week's notice, isn't it, Pepina?"

"So it is, dear," was the reply; "but still we ought to be thankful that we have another good home to go to, when so many poor creatures are wandering about in these hard times without a roof to shelter them."

"True, wife; but for all that, it's a hard thing to have to leave against one's will. I trust we shall be as happy in our new home as we were in our last."

"There's little fear of that," said Pepina; "our happiness will be, in a great measure, in our own hands. I have no doubt we shall be as happy in the new house as we have been in the one we have left."

"It will be no fault of mine if we are not," said Tomaso.

"That I know," said his wife. "You have been a good husband to me for the last fifty years, and I am sure there is no danger of your changing now."

"Fifty years!" said the driver, who, finding his passengers had so far recovered as to allow them the use of their tongues, had gradually slackened his pace, and had fallen back from the horse's head in a line with Tomaso and Pepina as they were seated in the cart. "Fifty years! Why you don't mean to say you have been married so long as that?"

"Very nearly," said Pepina; "we want only five days of it. Next Sunday we shall have been married fifty years."

"And a very happy time we have had of it," said Tomaso. "I should like to live as much longer."

"I don't know that we should gain much by it," said his wife. "At our time of life we have as many infirmities as we can well support; and how many we should have to bear when we had lived fifty, or even twenty years more, would be even terrible to think of. No, old man, we are better off as we are, unless we could find somebody to make us young again, and that is not very likely, I should think."

"I don't know that," said the driver, who was a native of Lecco. "There is a wonderful astrologer in our parts, who, they say, can make people young again. Not that I know any case of the kind; though, I must say, I have heard of some extraordinary things he has done, which no common man could do."

"Where does he live?" inquired Pepina.

"In the slope of the mountains, behind the Horns of Cantu."

"But perhaps," said Pepina, with a pious shudder, "he may be in league with the Evil one."

"I know nothing about that," said the driver, in a somewhat careless tone; "but I should rather think he is not. I never heard of him doing harm to any one, but I have heard of a good many he has been kind to, especially the poor."

"That don't look as if there was much wrong in him," said both husband and wife at the same time.

Conversation was carried on in this amicable manner until the cart arrived at Lecco, when Tomaso and his wife bade adieu to the friendly driver. Carrying the bundle which contained their clothes, they proceeded to a small inn, where they engaged a room for the night, determining to continue their journey the next day. In the evening they entered into conversation with some of the inmates of the house; and, by chance, the *Innominato* and his wonderful powers were mentioned. Tomaso and his wife (who had felt greatly interested in the details given by the driver respecting that singular individual) listened attentively, and made many inquiries. The answers they received had only the effect of greatly increasing their curiosity. When they retired for the night Tomaso said to his wife—

"I wish we could only find out the place where that astrologer lives. If we could, I should be much tempted to pay him a visit to-morrow."

"For what purpose?" inquired Pepina.

"I should like to know whether he could make us young again. If he could, it would go a great way to reconcile me to our removal."

"I should like it as much as you," said the old woman. "But if he can do so, I am afraid he would require more money than we have to give him."

"That we should know more about when we saw him," said Tomaso. "Even though we found that he wanted more than we could pay, we should be no worse off than we are now. But from what the driver told us, as well as what we heard this evening, he is not likely to be hard upon a poor old couple. I'll tell you what I will do. To-morrow I will inquire if he lives far from here, and if not, we will go and see him. It will do us no harm, even though we come back no better off than when we went."

"With all my heart," said the old woman. "I am sure if we succeed it would give me as much pleasure as it would you."

Next morning Tomaso rose at daybreak, and made many inquiries respecting the astrologer's abode, and the best method of reaching it. They found that they could arrive at it in the course of the day; so the old couple, after making a hearty breakfast, Tomaso shouldering his bundle, started for the castle of the Innominato. It was late in the afternoon when they reached the Hospice, where they remained while a servant took in their message. In a few minutes he returned and informed them that if they would follow him to the castle his master would see them immediately. On their arrival they were ushered into the presence of the Innominato, whom they found in his study, engaged in some chemical experiments, assisted by one of his servants. So deeply intent was he in his work, that it was some minutes before he was aware of their presence—a somewhat fortunate circumstance for them, for they were so overwhelmed by the mysterious aspect of the place, and the imposing appearance of the astrologer, that it is probable neither would have been able to address him. But presently the astrologer turned round, and seeing his two visitors, and the expression of bewilderment on their countenances, he addressed them with great kindness of tone and manner. After requesting them to be seated, he inquired the purpose of their visit.

"Learned sir," said Tomaso—rising from his seat, and evidently in great fear, bowing to the astrologer most obsequiously,—“we have heard that you are very kind to poor people, and that you can perform very wonderful things, so we have come to ask you to do us a great favour. At the same time, we hope you will not be offended at our boldness; and we are ready to pay you as much as we can afford.”

"As you say you do not intend to offend me," said the astrologer, "I will take no offence. At the same time, understand that I accept money from no one. Tell me plainly and conscientiously what you wish, and I will oblige you if I can; for, by aid of my science, I know you are a worthy old couple."

"Many thanks, Illustrissimo," said Tomaso, greatly encouraged by the

kind reception the astrologer was giving him; "we are much obliged to you for your good opinion. The truth is, we are much attached to each other, and have lived a very happy life together for many years. What we want to ask you is, whether you could make us young again, as we are now getting very old. We have been married fifty years come next Sunday."

"I am sorry I have not the power to oblige you," said the astrologer. "One of you I could make young again, but not both; that is far beyond my power. If that will meet your views, and you can settle between you which of the two it shall be, I am ready to oblige you."

For some seconds Tomaso and his wife remained silent, looking at each other in a state of great perplexity. At last Pepina said—

"I am obliged to your excellency for the offer, but, for my own part, I decline it. I should like to be young again if my husband could be so too; but I have no wish to change if he must remain old. Whatever good I may get I always like to share it with him."

"And I am of the same opinion," said Tomaso. "I have no wish to be young if she is to remain old. We will now leave you, sir, if you cannot make us both young; but, at the same time, we are much obliged to you for your condescension in receiving us." So saying, he rose, and taking up his bundle, prepared to depart.

"Stop one moment," said the astrologer. "I wish to oblige you as far as I can, and I have another proposition to make, though I hardly think you will agree to it. I cannot make you both young—my power being limited—but I can divide the gift. I can make one of you young and beautiful in appearance, but whichever of you it may be, must retain the grave method of thinking and speaking of old age. The other must keep the appearance of age, but shall have the mind and spirits of youth—gay, buoyant, and enthusiastic. Now what do you say to my offer? If you are satisfied with it you can decide between yourselves which portion of the gift you would each like to accept."

Again Tomaso and his wife were silent for some seconds, both being evidently inclined to accept the offer of the astrologer.

"I see," he continued, "that you both like the idea. Before you definitely decide, however, let me urge you to consider well what you are about to accept, as very likely you will both be exposed to the ridicule of your friends when you return home."

"We are not going to our old home," said Tomaso, "but to a farm near Menagio, where nobody knows us. We have hitherto lived in the Bresciano."

"That entirely alters the case," said the astrologer. "But other inconveniences may possibly arise, therefore think well over the matter before you decide."

"I have made up my mind, sir," said Tomaso. "Give me but the spirits of youth, and I am perfectly content to wear the appearance of old age."

"And what do you say?" said the astrologer, addressing Pepina.

The old woman hung her head with an absurd appearance of modesty, but made no reply.

"If you do not give me an answer," said the astrologer, "I can do nothing for either."

Still Pepina was silent.

"Then the bargain is dropped," said the astrologer, turning again to the experiment he was performing, "and we will say no more about it."

"I will do just as my husband pleases, sir," said Pepina, quickly, and evidently alarmed.

"And I wish her to be young and beautiful," said Tomaso; "but to remain discreet and steady as she now is."

"Very well," said the astrologer, "then we are all agreed. Go now to the Hospice, where you can remain for the night. But remember, you must rise before daybreak, and, without a lamp or any other light, start on your journey. As the sun rises you will gradually undergo the transformation you wish—the one in mind and the other in body. One word more. You are a good old couple, and in case you should find that you do not like your altered condition after you have tried it, I will give you an opportunity of returning to your present state, should you desire it. On Sunday next you say you will have been married fifty years. If at any time before midnight on Saturday you should both wish to be restored to your former condition of life, you can do so; but remember, you must be at one on the subject. Now you can leave me."

The old couple now quitted the presence of the Innominato, and descended to the Hospice, where a good supper had been prepared for them. After partaking of it they retired to their room, but not to sleep—so fearful and anxious were they lest the sun might rise before they awoke and were able to carry out the instructions of the astrologer.

It wanted considerably more than an hour of daybreak when they left the house to commence their journey. For some time their progress was trifling, for the night was dark, their eyesight dim, and the path somewhat difficult to keep. After they had proceeded about a mile from the castle, the old man commenced to sing, at the top of his cracked voice, a warrior's song, which drew from Pepina rather a sharp remark on the folly of his behaviour—singing in such an absurd manner, instead of carefully looking which way they were going, while they were on the edge of a precipice. Tomaso, in obedience to his wife's wishes, stopped his singing for some minutes, but he soon burst out again still louder than before, at the same time using the most ludicrous gesticulations, as if he saw an enemy before him whom he was about to attack. Pepina now got fairly angry, and fractiously told him not to make an old fool of himself. Tomaso stopped his singing a second time, and good-naturedly turned round to say something conciliatory to his wife, when a faint ray of the coming dawn passing through a cleft in the mountains allowed him to gain a tolerably distinct view of her face. He gazed at her in silent astonishment, for she now appeared a buxom woman of about fifty years of age—stout, well-made, erect, and hearty. Pepina seemed at a loss to understand her husband's astonishment, and somewhat angrily inquired what he saw to make him stare at her in that silly manner.

"See in you?" said Tomaso, almost breathless with surprise—"see in

you? Why, a very handsome woman. Don't you think that is a very good excuse for staring at you? I declare you are twice as plump as you were before we went to the astrologer."

Pepina now felt her own arms, and then took as good a look at her person as the faint light of day would enable her to do. She could easily perceive that her form was greatly changed for the better. She, however, expressed no pleasure at this, but said, in a fractious tone—

"It was well worth while, indeed, to spend the whole of yesterday, wearing the soles off one's feet, to find out that conjuror, and then to be made fifty years of age! I suspect he is only a cheat after all. He promised me I should become young and beautiful, and he has made me fifty, if I am a day. I would just as soon have kept as I was."

"Come, come, wife," said Tomaso, "don't be ungrateful. For a person at your time of life to have twenty years taken off their head in less than an hour is really a good deal gained."

"My time of life!" said Pepina, "my time of life, indeed! Look at your own. I can walk upright, at any rate, and that's more than you can do, try as much as you please."

They now entered a narrow valley hung with high trees, which so completely shut out the little light as to leave them again in total darkness. Here Pepina, finding her husband moved along with great difficulty, offered to carry the bundle for him, saying that she was far stronger than he was. Tomaso took this offer very ill, and he told her he was not a man to require assistance from her or any other woman; and by way of proving his words, hurried on before her, stumbling continually as he went. His ill-humour, however, soon vanished, and he again commenced to sing his warrior's song in the same absurd manner as before.

The road now opened up, being no longer overshadowed by trees. The daylight had now also increased so much that they could see a considerable distance before them. Tomaso still continued in front, singing his song, and taking no notice of his wife, who followed him silently and sedately.

Again their path lay along the side of a deep precipice, at the bottom of which rushed a swollen mountain stream. Tomaso, on hearing the noise, looked below for a moment, and then continued his road, singing as lustily as ever. He also amused himself by walking at the extreme edge of the precipice, to Pepina's intense terror, for he stumbled incessantly, and appeared fatigued.

"Come away from that dangerous place, you silly old man," she said. "Do you wish to break your neck? Come away, I say, and give me the bundle, for I see you are so tired you can hardly get along."

"That is not true," said Tomaso, turning round; "I was never stronger." Here he stopped speaking, and looked for some minutes in speechless astonishment at his wife, who now appeared a very handsome woman of thirty years of age. When she had reached him, she inquired what was the matter, that he had so suddenly become silent.

"Pepina," he said, "I cannot take my eyes off you. I never in my life saw a more beautiful woman than you have become. Give me a kiss."

"Nonsense, you silly old man," was her reply; "hold your tongue, and do not make a fool of yourself. Go on again, and keep away from the edge of the precipice."

But far from obeying her, Tomaso walked by her side, and attempted to make himself as agreeable as possible by saying all the sweet things which came into his head; to all of which Pepina lent either a deaf ear, or upbraided him for his folly. Finding his compliments had no other effect on her than to make her still more ill-tempered, he determined to try what singing would do, and immediately commenced a love song, which he sang in a most impressive manner, but in so cracked a voice that he made himself perfectly ridiculous. It was not, however, without its effect on Pepina, who, began to cry, and her husband, mistaking the cause, attempted to give a still more impassioned and pathetic tone to his voice; and by so doing made himself more absurd than ever.

Pepina still continuing to cry, her husband said to her—"Why do you weep, my dear? are you unhappy?" evidently thinking at the moment that she had melted into tears at the sweetness of his singing.

"Unhappy?" she replied; "how can I be otherwise, when I see an old man, who ought to know better, behaving himself so? You ought to be ashamed, croaking there like an old raven, and imagining that you are singing. If you have no respect for yourself, you ought at least to have a little for your wife's feelings."

Tomaso turned round to return her a sharp answer, but she looked so beautiful that he had not the heart to say anything unkind, and the pair walked on together for some time in silence, Tomaso, however, keeping close by the side of his wife.

Pepina, who had now dried her tears, wished in her turn to say something agreeable to her spouse, by way of smoothing away any little rancour against her that might still remain in his mind, and asked him in a kind tone whether he found his rheumatism better.

"My rheumatism!" he replied, tartly; "when I complain to you of it you may then speak to me about it. I am no more rheumatic than you are. At the same time, I hope you don't suffer from your corns this morning as you did yesterday?"

"My corns, indeed!" said Pepina, with a toss of her head, and stopping to put out one of the prettiest little feet that could be seen in all Lombardy. "I should like to know where you would find them. But don't let us quarrel any more; but give me the bundle, for you must be getting tired, and I am a good deal stronger than you are."

Tomaso had too much gallantry to allow her to carry the bundle; and they now continued amicably enough on their road till they came to a roadside inn, at which they determined to stop for breakfast. They seated themselves at a table near the door, and the landlord soon spread before Tomaso some bread, cheese, and wine; his wife contenting herself with a cup of new milk, some fruit, and bread. When they had finished their meal, their host entered into conversation with them by asking how far they had travelled that morning. Tomaso told him only a few miles, saying nothing

about his visit to the castle of the Innominato, and he then asked the landlord if they were far distant from Bellagio.

"About four hours' walk," said the landlord. "Are you going to see any of the gay doings which are going on there?"

"I did not know that there were any," said Tomaso, delighted at the idea, while Pepina appeared to receive the news with perfect indifference. "What sort of gay doings are they?"

"Oh! there are a number of soldiers there, and very handsome young fellows they are; and they have excellent music."

"How fortunate!" said Tomaso.

"All the pretty girls for miles round are gathering there," continued the landlord; "and the soldiers, who are very gallant, dance with them every evening."

Tomaso's expression of countenance fell considerably at this information.

"If you are going to stop there any time you had better take care," said the landlord, laughing, "or one of them will be running away with your pretty granddaughter, as I suppose she is."

"You have made a very great mistake, my friend," said Tomaso, angrily. "She is my wife."

The landlord had so much difficulty in restraining his laughter at this information, that Tomaso noticed it, and was upon the point of saying something uncivil, when Pepina, fearing there might be an altercation, put in, that they only intended stopping the night at Bellagio, and then crossing over to the other side of the lake next morning.

"I think you would do wisely, old gentleman, if you kept to that resolution," said the landlord; "for, otherwise, I can assure you your pretty wife will have a great many admirers."

Tomaso was exceedingly displeased at the landlord's remark, and answered him very sharply. Even Pepina told him that he ought not to talk such nonsense, and that there was no one handsomer in her eyes than her husband; at which the landlord burst into a very loud and rude laugh. Tomaso now got thoroughly into a passion, and after abusing the landlord soundly, he threw their reckoning on the table, and, snatching up his bundle, he and Pepina started on their journey again.

For some time they walked on silently together, Tomaso evidently sulky, though he said nothing. The truth was, he felt annoyed at the indifference Pepina showed to the landlord's remarks when he spoke of her beauty; and he seemed to think that she ought to have considered them as an insult, and shown proper and becoming spirit on the occasion. He then began to conjure up in his mind the possibility of her wishing to dance with the handsome young soldiers at Bellagio. In all this, however, he did his wife a great injustice. The fact was, she cared nothing for gaieties of the kind. Her state of mind was that of advanced age, which, of course, had undergone no change when she became beautiful; and although she might not have been, at the moment, angry when the landlord paid her the compliments (what woman would have been?), they had scarcely been uttered than they were

forgotten, and her mind had reverted to the domestic duties she would have to perform at the new house, and what sort of a dwelling it would prove.

When they had arrived within two or three miles of Bellagio, Tomaso, who had remained sullen and uneasy during the whole of the afternoon, suddenly complained of fatigue, and proposed to stay the night at a poor-looking little inn, instead of going further on. Pepina, however, not liking the appearance of the place, advised that they should continue their journey; whereupon Tomaso got into a great passion, and accused her of wishing to mix in the gaities of Bellagio, when nothing could have been further from the poor woman's thoughts. Her idea was simply that they would be able to find a more comfortable bed at Bellagio than at the house where her husband proposed to remain. After they had passed the little inn a few hundred yards, Tomaso positively refused to go further, and Pepina, getting angry in her turn, was determined to go on; and her husband, telling her that she should, in that case, do it by herself, returned alone and inquired of the landlord whether he could give him a bed, and received in reply that he had not an unoccupied room in the house, it being full of soldiers who had been quartered on him.

On hearing this, Tomaso immediately left and hurried on after his wife. When they had arrived within two miles of their destination, they seated themselves on a bank by the side of the path, as they both began to feel fatigued by the unusual amount of exertion they had undergone. Presently they heard a noise in a thick clump of shrubs before them, as if some one was, with difficulty, making a way through, and a moment afterwards a young soldier made his appearance. He was remarkably handsome, and his fine figure appeared to still greater advantage from the attractive style of his uniform. His features were regular, and though he was somewhat sunburnt, this in no way detracted from his martial look; but his face at the time was rather flushed, for he was to all appearance partially intoxicated. For a moment he seemed surprised at the singular-looking couple before him, but recovering himself, he cast an impudent look on Pepina, and said—

"What, tired, my pretty girl? I hope you are going my way, and then I can have the pleasure of offering you my arm."

"I neither want your arm nor your acquaintance," said Pepina. "Go on your way and leave us alone."

"Come, come, now," said the soldier, in a cajoling manner, and advancing close to her, "do not speak in that cruel manner. Ill-temper doesn't become such a pretty countenance, does it, old gentleman? Is this pretty girl your daughter or your granddaughter?"

"Neither," said Tomaso, rising from the bank in a great passion at the impertinent behaviour of the soldier. "That lady is my wife."

"Your wife? Nonsense!" said the soldier. "You don't mean to tell me that that lovely creature could ever have chosen such a withered old baboon as you are?"

"I told you the truth," said Tomaso; "and what is more, if I hear any further impertinence from you I will chastise you so severely that you will not forget the lesson the longest day you live."

The only answer the soldier gave to Tomaso's threat was a loud laugh, and then walking up to Pepina, who had also risen from the bank, and putting his arm round her waist, he said to her—

"Come with me, my dear, and never mind him. You are far too handsome to be the wife of such a crabbed old fool as he is."

Pepina, enraged at the soldier's impertinence, told him to leave her alone; and by way of giving point to her words, she gave him a sound box on the ear.

"A fair challenge, by Jove!" said the soldier. "There is the same penalty for that all the world over, and I claim it now." So saying, he put his arm round her neck and gave her a hearty kiss.

Both husband and wife now set upon him, and buffeted him soundly; indeed, so sudden and hearty were they in their attacks, that the soldier was completely taken by surprise. He struggled violently to disengage himself, but found it no easy matter, for their combined strength was quite equal to his own. At last, however, by a violent effort, he managed to release himself, and standing at a short distance, he remained for some moments to gather his scattered wits, so completely had they been dispersed by the vigorous attack of his two assailants. When he had somewhat succeeded, he said to Pepina—

"I forgive you, young lady, for I cannot revenge myself upon you—but that amiable old gentleman shall suffer for his behaviour to-morrow morning, I can tell him. I suppose you are going to Bellagio, and unfortunately I am going the other way. I am already somewhat behind time, and my sergeant is not particularly forgiving, so I must be off. But we shall meet again, old gentleman, and then if you do not give me satisfaction, I will cudgel your old body till it is black and blue all over. Two hours after daybreak to-morrow I will be with you; so look for me." Saying this, he started off in the direction of the inn they had lately passed.

Tomaso and his wife now continued their road to Bellagio, naturally very indignant at the behaviour of the soldier. Little conversation passed between the old couple, and even that at last passed into a dead silence, which continued till darkness had set in. When they had come to within about a quarter of an hour's walk of Bellagio, Pepina's attention was aroused by the sound of some one sobbing bitterly, and on listening more attentively, she found that it proceeded from Tomaso, who was walking a few paces in advance of her. She hastened up to him and found her suspicions were correct, and that he was crying like a child.

"What is the matter with you, my dear?" she said to him. "Why do you cry so? It is not, I hope, at the rude behaviour of the soldier. I think we have given him a good lesson, and we may now treat him with contempt."

"I do not care one straw about him, and if he puts his threat into force to-morrow, I think he will find me as completely his match as he did to-day," said Tomaso, totally ignoring the part Pepina had taken in the fray, which had been far more effective than his own. "I am unhappy from another cause. You are, in appearance, young and beautiful, while I am old and de-

crepit. All admire you, and all will ridicule me for having a wife so young and handsome; and I see that my life will, for the future, be one of utter misery, for I love you dearly, and cannot bear the idea of others paying you the attentions you will receive. I am afraid I made a very foolish bargain after all."

"But there is no difficulty in getting off it you know, dear," said Pepina. "The astrologer told us that, if we repented of the transaction, we could change to our former condition any time before next Sunday, when we shall have been married fifty years."

"But if I do change," said Tomaso, still crying, "I do not see that I shall gain much by it. I shall then have an old man's mind in an old man's body; while you will still remain in person young and beautiful."

"But why should I remain young and beautiful?" said Pepina, artlessly. "He gave me the power to change if I wished it, as fully as he did to you."

"And you would really give up youth and beauty to please me?" said Tomaso, in a tone of mingled surprise and delight.

"Certainly," said his wife. "Why not? Just let us at once wish ourselves old again in mind and body, and so put an end to all unpleasantness between us."

Tomaso, of course, willingly agreed to this suggestion, and the transformation immediately took place. How it was effected it was impossible to say, so dense was the darkness around them. Tomaso's mind was now again that of an old man, while Pepina's form was once more that of an old woman, her body bent, and her step slow and difficult. At last they contrived to reach Bellagio in safety, and they put up for the night at a little inn at the entrance to the town.

Next morning Tomaso rose early, and proceeded to the water-side to engage a boat to carry him and his wife over to Menagio. Having secured one, he told the boatman to remain in readiness, as he would return in a few minutes. He then left the water-side, and was on his way back to the inn to fetch Pepina and settle with the landlord, when he heard some one calling out to him, "Stop, I say, you old baboon. You shan't escape me so easily as that."

On hearing the voice, Tomaso turned round and beheld the soldier of the previous evening, with a couple of swords under his arm, and a dozen of his comrades at his heels, advancing towards him.

"So I have found you, my friend," said the soldier. "You see I am a man of my word. And now, in the presence of my honourable comrades, I intend to wipe off the stain you put on my honour yesterday evening."

"Leave me alone," said Tomaso. "I want to have nothing to say to you."

"That I can easily imagine," said the soldier; "and I am perfectly willing to admit that it is not an unreasonable wish on your part. But, my friend, I take a totally different view of the case, and satisfaction for the insult you offered me yesterday I will have. I have brought with me a couple of good swords, so that you can have no excuse. Choose which you like, and you shall have fair play. By-the-by, where is your pretty wife? Yes, you may

laugh, comrades," he continued; "but this old fellow has one of the handsomest girls for a wife I ever saw in my life. That I will say, although she was not particularly civil to me last night. No matter; I shall easily find the means to get into her good graces; and my first step shall be to rid her of her ugly old husband. I am sure she will be grateful to me for that, so there will be something gained. I only wish she were here now to see the pains I am taking to make her a widow."

This wish was immediately accomplished; for Pepina, who, witnessing the scene from the window of the inn, had judged the soldier's intentions, now rushed through the crowd, and after buffeting the fellow's face severely, she seized him by the hair, which she pulled out by handfuls at a time—the soldier in vain attempting to rid himself of her.

"Comrades," he called out, "for heaven's sake take away this hag; I shall not have a hair left on my head if you don't." But his companions, instead of assisting him, roared with laughter, and asked him jeeringly if this was the young beauty he had been raving so much about.

How long Pepina would have kept up the struggle it is impossible to say, had it not been put a stop to by the captain of the soldiers, who came forward to inquire the cause of the tumult.

"What is all this about?" he asked, as soon as some of the men, in obedience to his orders, had released their comrade from Pepina's clutches.

"He wanted to murder my husband, who is an infirm old man, and I am protecting him."

"And most efficiently, it appears," said the captain. "And now what is your version of the story?" he continued, addressing the soldier.

"In the first place, captain," said the soldier, "this hag is not the fellow's wife"—here he was interrupted by Pepina, who burst from the men holding her, and rushing on the soldier, assailed him even more vigorously than before, exclaiming at the same time, "How dare you say I am not his wife, when I have been married to him for fifty years? I will soon prove to you that I am."

Pepina was again drawn away from the soldier, and the captain inquired of Tomaso whether she was really his wife.

"She is, your excellency."

"Have you any complaint to make against the soldier?"

"I have, your excellency; and a great one too. He met us yesterday evening, and grossly insulted my wife; indeed, we had great difficulty in getting away from him."

"Well, what have you to say in your defence?" said the captain, turning to the soldier.

"I never insulted the old woman, captain, nor did I ever see her before. It is true I saw this fellow yesterday, but he was with a very beautiful young woman whom he called his wife."

The captain then inquired of Pepina whether she was with her husband the previous evening, and whether any other person had been with them. He received for answer that there was no one else present, and that she had not quitted her husband's society even for a minute during the whole of the day.

"Now," said the captain to the soldier, "one thing is clear to me; and that is, that you must have been drunk again yesterday evening; for no one in his sober senses could have mistaken this old woman for a handsome young girl. I have warned you many times that your drinking habits would at last bring you into disgrace, and you have paid no attention to these warnings. But I will now give you a lesson you will not easily forget. For one month you shall remain in irons; and the next time I hear any complaint against you, the sentence shall be confinement in irons for one year. Take him into custody," said the captain to his attendants, "and see that my orders are carried out." The soldier was immediately removed, and the crowd shortly afterwards dispersed.

Tomaso, accompanied by his wife, and carrying his bundle, then went to the boat which he had engaged, and they were rowed across the lake to Menagio. In the evening they arrived at their new dwelling, which they found very commodious, and in excellent condition. They resided in it during the remainder of their lives, without anything worthy of notice occurring to mar their happiness.

LAST DAYS OF MR. CROMPTON,

TAILOR AND HABITMAKER.

HIS trade was a habitmaker, and his name was Crompton. I remember him well just after he had retired from the cabbage and shears; but I remember him earlier, for he made my first suit of clothes—claret colour with silver ball buttons.

Mr. Crompton, though occupying an unobtrusive shop, very unlike a modern tailor's, had been for nearly half a century the great habitmaker to the *élite* of Somersetshire and Wiltshire. Not Fadladeen himself, while discharging his office with the girdle of beautiful forms, had encircled half so many or so fair damsels' waists with that same belt as Mr. Crompton with his strips of parchment; and though the shop had such a work-a-day looking exterior, the finest cloths of the West of England were fitted there on her loveliest daughters' shoulders, without a wrinkle to disguise charms no art could enhance. To the same tasteful decorator of the person young mammas brought their first-born little boys to be made into little coxcombs. He provided them with articles incomparable in style and quality; and no marvel that such and so great a man never married, and living over his shop with his maiden sister, working hard at a time of life when most men leave their work to others, should realize what his journeymen supposed must be enormous riches.

In an evil hour for his own peace, however, Crompton admitted into his inner breast the thought of retiring from business. It was on a summer evening, when a twinge of gout had disinclined him for his usual ramble, that he sat at his sitting-room window, with his leg resting upon a chair and a silk handkerchief thrown over his head, that Miss Crompton, or a fury in the

disguise of that mild and venerable dame, addressed him in these flying words, and hurled a serpent at his heart :—

“George,” said she, “if I were you, I would leave off business, and take a house somewhere with a garden. You have as much as you want, more than we can spend, and too much to leave to such ungrateful people as the Screwwms. I’d retire and be a gentleman, and enjoy myself in my old age, that I would.”

Softly the words distilled upon old Crompton’s ears. It was just what he was thinking of himself. He enjoyed a sort of personal celebrity in his trade which he was unwilling to lose; but then he thought, quitting it now, he should sink in his glory like an Indian sun. There was no second Crompton in the county, no great originaive mind. Society would deplore his loss in its fairest parts; and if the ladies sought consolation, it must be from the members of his family—for as such he regarded his apprentices—the men formed under his shears, and approaching him as Gibbs and Vanbrugh approached Sir Christopher Wren, or Julio Romano, Rafael, or Sebastien, Michael Angelo. His fame might linger round his goose, and his shop be thronged for another generation.

A flexible, civil, and well-connected youth had just served his time as Crompton’s apprentice. He had shown considerable talent both behind the counter and on the board, and his principal meditated retaining him as foreman when Mr. Price, who was on the point of marriage with Miss Wright, should leave him. *Sed Diis aliter visum*, for while these thoughts were agitating the master mind, the man begged leave to introduce a rich uncle, formerly in the tallow line, but long since retired to a country house, where he had cultivated his mind as well as his fields, and lived respected by his neighbours, in whose society he was occasionally found, perhaps because he never sought it. Enough. In him Crompton beheld the realization of all he wished to be at that moment himself; and this man intimated his desire to treat with Crompton for making his nephew his successor at any time he might choose to retire from business.

The habitmaker stated fairly enough the net profits of his trade; and after some two hours’ conversation, in which he was reluctant to ask a price for the reversion, and the other shy of making an offer, a light broke in on Crompton, and he said—

“Sir, at a word, what will you give me to retire, and give my goodwill to your nephew?”

“I shall be happy to consider your demand,” answered Mr. Jeremiah Cripps.

“Well, say four thousand pounds for the lease, stock, and goodwill.”

“I should suppose that a just price from my nephew’s information,” said Mr. Cripps; “so, subject to future verification, we are agreed.”

“Agreed,” said Mr. Crompton.

The arrangements now proceeded rapidly. There was honest intention on both sides. Stock was taken. Within three weeks the money was paid, and Mr. Crompton entertained Cripps, his nephew Peter, the two elder apprentices, the other deacon of the chapel, and his wife to support Miss Crompton, at a festival commemorative of the transfer.

The house Crompton selected as the asylum of his declining years was situated in a row of buildings not a quarter of a mile from his abandoned shop, and had a long garden descending the terraced side of a hill. It had been carefully and expensively fitted up; and after a lapse of three months, during which the owner had been much occupied in superintending the move, he shook hands cordially with his successor, and accompanied Miss Crompton to his new abode.

"I hope you will look in upon us sometimes, sir; we shall be always thankful to see you," said Peter Cripps.

Now it must be observed that this was considered a matter of great importance. Peter Cripps feared, not unreasonably, that if Crompton should disappear suddenly from his shop, the custom might go with him. Crompton would not allow the firm to be called Crompton and Cripps—no, not for six months; so it was settled that the old name should stand as it did, in gold letters over the door, and "Cripps late" in little letters above it. Mr. Crompton, on his part, promised to be about the shop for an hour or so in the most fashionable hours of the day, occasionally, and introduce and recommend his young apprentice to his old customers.

"Ay, that I will, Peter," was Crompton's reply.

He kept his word. On the evening of the first day of gentility, he lounged out with his sister. On the next, he read the paper, attempted a little gardening with indifferent success, and towards night felt some symptoms of *ennui*. On the third day, he again read the paper and walked down to his shop, cordially welcomed by his successor, and sat for half an hour conversing across the counter. The next day he came earlier and stayed longer. On the third, while Peter was enlarging on the merits of a piece of cloth, Crompton joined in the recommendation. On the fourth the shop was crowded, when a lady came in and desired to speak to Mr. Crompton himself.

"Your servant, madam," said the late proprietor.

"I want you to make me a green habit just like my sister's—off the very same cloth. Do you remember it?"

"Precisely, madam; but allow me to introduce Mr. Cripps, to whom I have made over my business, a very excellent workman, madam, of incomparable taste. He will be——"

"Oh, no, Mr. Crompton,"—the lady cut him short—"if that is the case, I shall wait. I should have liked one of *your* habits; but as you have given up, I shall get one in London."

"Give me leave, madam." And Crompton stepped behind the counter to where the roll of green cloth was deposited, from which the admired habit had been cut. "This is one of the most beautiful cloths that I ever met with, and, I think, could scarcely be matched in London. Cloths, madam, even from the same manufacturer, when the price we pay is the same, and that the highest, vary. Differences in the different flocks of Merino sheep; differences of the treatment of the wool in dyeing and the material of the dye—they are all dyed in the wool—of the weather in which the cloth is dried, and the dexterity of the individual dresser, render no two cloths precisely alike.

"That is a cloth, mem," and he crushed it slightly and held it up in his hand before her, "that I should say was unrivalled in the great metropolis."

"Ah, very true, Mr. Crompton," said the lady; "but there is more in a habit than the cloth, and I do not mean to trust mine to young hands on trial."

"Mem, I pledge my reputation that if you but imagine any difference in your sister's habit and that which Mr. Cripps shall make you, I will, at my own cost and with my own hands, immediately make a body that shall please you."

"Well, if you say so, I am content. When can you let me have it?"

"Peter!" said Mr. Crompton.

Peter Cripps came forward, and, after a short conference with the lady, one of Crompton's best customers was secured to Cripps.

With generous gratitude the youth expressed his obligations to his late master. The promptitude of his genius, the facility of his introduction, and the condescension of his manner, all made the junior feel that if he was not a fashionable tradesman himself, it could never be from the want of an illustrious model.

On the morrow Crompton appeared, as usual, towards the middle of the day, and, after an exchange of civilities, proceeded—

"Peter, have you got the green habit in hand?"

"They are going on with the skirt, sir, and I have marked out the body."

"Let us see," said Crompton, and led the way to the workroom, where the men welcomed their old master. "Oh, this is it—ah!—the chalk—more so—she has a full upper arm—more room—that will bring it smooth from the neck—just give me——" He took up the shears, and, with the taste and care which had gained him reputation and fortune, he cut out the habit body, cautioned the man who was to make it up, and came downstairs overpowered by the gratitude of Peter. Two months afterwards you might see Crompton at all hours, full of energy, quite re-established in his shop, and giving life to all round him; and when he was not there, he was cutting out upstairs, and never seemed to feel a momentary suspicion that the business was not his own.

How long this state of things might have gone on it is not easy to say. It was accompanied, however, by some little annoyances, which were gradually growing into great ones. Crompton would call about him as he was wont in olden time. The shop was his shop, the men his servants, and the handiest of them all, the present master, was oftenest involved, as for example: "Here, Peter; that roll in the top row; be quick!" Some failure was complained of by a customer; Crompton censured Peter. Nay, a journeyman committed some error, and Crompton talked of discharging him; and never a day passed but customers came in who would speak to nobody but Crompton.

With bated breath and whispering humbleness, Peter represented the matter to his venerable ally. He was thankful, most thankful; he had profited largely by all that he had done, but no one looked on him as master of his own establishment, and never would while the late principal was always apparently at its head.

"Why, Peter, I am making your fortune," said the other.

"You know, sir, the change must come some day, and I think we are strong enough now to try what we can do for ourselves. Besides, I am hurt at the people turning their backs on me in the way they do, and everybody says I am only a sham, and it is your business still."

"Oh, well, Peter, if you say so, though it really gives me much pleasure to help you everywhere, I will go and mind things in the cutting-out room. There nobody will see me, and I will only stay down in the shop of mornings. How will that do?"

The astonished Peter expressed extreme gratitude. The overbearing manner of his predecessor was gone. He had dreaded a storm, but all was sunshine; and ever afterwards Crompton was invisible after mid-day to the *beau monde* of his beautiful city.

And calmly the old man's years might have run out, but for an untoward circumstance.

The ladies' waists, which for many years had been as high or higher than it was possible to draw an effective cincture, had already settled into their natural place. Crompton's good taste, which had aided in bringing them resolved to keep them there; and when fashion gradually changed, and the waists attained the length of Sir G. Kneller's beauties, armed with his prodigious shears, he entered an action against them. No such enormity, he vowed, should leave his board; and, sure enough, for half a year he carried his point. It was a sublime spectacle—Crompton against the world.

The fair ones at length, however, rebelled in earnest; and Peter, resolved to lose no custom by want of spirit, went up to London, and engaged a Frenchman from a first-rate house, at high wages, to do what Crompton conscientiously abhorred. The Frenchman and Peter returned together, and in due time they entered the workroom. Due time, for Crompton had rolled down a piece of Saxony to commence a habit, from measurements noted down before him.

"Give me leave, sir," said Peter, "to introduce Mr. Adolphe Moncontour, whom I have engaged to assist in the cutting department."

Crompton glared on the intruder, and his countenance fell. "What Peter! why what do you want of Papist Frenchmen here? Haven't I cut out every article for the last eighteen months? This is—ah! I understand it—a way to get those abominable deformities made in this house, and as long as I am here it shall not be for all the mounseers in the world!" And he proceeded with the cutting out of a habit for which a long waist had been imperatively ordered. Adolphe stepped to his side, and was powerfully affected by the design. He could not restrain his feelings.

"Ah, monsieur! you shall spoil dat beautiful cloth! I shall show you how to cut the habit fashionable, with the beautiful long waist, after the manner Parisienne. Ah, *vraiment!* I shall teach you de way!"

"You teach *me*, you confounded fellow; go and teach the frogs to hop down your lantern jaws before I cut you into shreds. *You* talk of teaching *me!*" And he raised his fist with the great scissors upright on the table.

Peter interfered. "I hope, sir, you will allow him to cut out the habits

ordered in the present mode; I shall be happy for you to cut out the children's dresses."

Crompton threw down the two-fold sceptre of command; he hastened downstairs; the intense planting of his gold-headed cane kept time with his heavy footsteps; and before Peter Cripps had thought how to appease him he had left the premises. He reached his home, threw himself into his easy chair, and burst into tears.

Peter was sorry that his old master was hurt, but rather glad to get rid of him, on the whole. He had read *The Arabian Nights* and thought of the Old Man of the Sea, so he resolved to let the quarrel take its course. M. Adolphe was regularly installed in the cutting department, and having already cut out the great Crompton, and made him cut his employer, this was no bad beginning. The business still prospered; and after a few weeks nobody missed the man who for nearly half a century had been its life and soul.

Not so the unfortunate Crompton. He was wounded in a vital part. In vain did he seek amusement or occupation by embroiling the affairs of the meeting and insulting the preacher. In vain did he try to read the papers, in no part of which he felt any interest but the cloth market. The fashions he regarded with intense disgust. He wandered near the roof no more his home, and groaned in vexation. Oh that dream of gentility and leisure that beckoned him the way that he was going. For his health declined rapidly. The red of his nose grew purple, his appetite was gone, and the medical man whom he consulted spoke unfavourably of him to Miss Crompton.

Such was the state of affairs when, one hot evening, the exile was seen looking in at the window of his old shop, and, after much hesitation, entering the door.

Peter stood behind the counter.

"Mr. Cripps, I will not speak to anybody, I will not go into the work-room, but do let me sit down in my shop."

He seated himself on a chair, folded his arms on the counter, and laid his head upon them.

He remained there for some time, and Cripps thought he had fallen asleep. At last, finding that he did not move, he came close up to his old master, and said, timidly,

"Are you well, sir?"

He answered not. He never again spoke to a customer—he went into the workshop no more.

V. E.



SOCIAL EVENINGS.

BY LIEUTENANT FOOZY.

I.

"**L**IEUTENANT FOOZY has much pleasure in regretting that he cannot accept Lady Maida's kind invitation."

It did not read right, somehow.

"Kind invitation?" That was true; there is nothing to be got out of me, as her ladyship knows by this time.

"Regretting?" Well, if a man proffers you a sausage, you regret that you cannot gratify him by accepting it.

"Pleasure?" I certainly was glad not to go.

Still it would not flow, as the fine writers say. There seemed to be a back wanted, and I could not think of one to put; so in despair I at last sent an acceptance, trusting that something would turn up.

Nothing did turn up; so I went.

Lady Maida is a gliding woman. Years ago, when a tall girl at a boarding school, she was informed by the drilling-master, an ex-jäger, that she was a gazelle. He meant a giraffe, and she owed the compliment, if it was one, to his imperfect knowledge of English. It is an axiom, I believe, among polite lovers, that nothing is so effective as an unintentional compliment. Herr Weinig's unintentionality, as he would have called it, was most effective: the gazelle, Miss Spoffkins, forthwith set herself to study and imitate the habits of her namesakes. She applied for information to the youngest governess, who, being shaky on her natural history, quoted from poetry "Graceful gazelle." Being pressed for further particulars, she drew upon her imagination, and said "Gliding gazelle." The phrase pleased. Miss Spoffkins from that day devoted the whole energy of her being to gliding. She was not unsuccessful, and in due time glided into matrimony with Sir John Maida, a gentleman who had been baronnetted for some excellence so deep that it was altogether beyond the vulgar ken. She is wont to boast of having been married "just out of the school-room," and there is still a boarding-school flavour about her. Lady Maida, née Spoffkins, is always almost a lady. She is now gliding about in society with two daughters, who call her Munny, and are, of course, bounding girls. Christened Mariana and Hortensia, they entirely decline to answer (to use their own expressive phrase) to any names but Polly and Holly. They are at present very young; what they will be in full development is uncertain; but, judging from the marked peculiarities of their present nebulous condition, they will be most eccentric comets.

Polly is my favourite; that is, I don't dislike her quite so much as I do Holly, who has a square white face drawn out laterally, a habit of standing at ease, and a forty-woman power of questioning, as thus:—

"I did not see you in the Row this morning, Lieuty."

"No."

"I never do see you riding there."

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't like the smell of it."

Nothing less than an answer of this sort will content Holly.

It cannot be said that Sir John Maida contributes much to what I believe is generally called the success of his wife's evenings. There certainly is a fenced-off figure in a dark corner of the farthest drawing-room, which is politely supposed to be him; but no living man could sit so still for two weary hours. It is probably a sofa-cushion, dressed up with a Chinese mask. Really, not a bad idea, if one could visit in the same fashion; no worse than sending the liveryman's horses to mourn at a friend's funeral; very similar, indeed—sparing one's own feelings and gratifying those of somebody else, that indefinite, mythical somebody, who never cares two pins about the matter.

Lady Maida's chief aid is her brother, whom, in defiance of cases, vocative and accusative, she addresses as "Th' Admiral," till most people have come to regard the title as his name, which is precisely what she does not wish.

The Admiral has nothing nautical in his talk, unless it be the peculiar seesaw waddle of his intonation, suggestive of the long rolling of the ship, and either soothing or nauseating, according to the temperament of the listener. His topics are exclusively newspaper. I always go through the day's papers, *Times*, *Standard*, and *Pall Mall*, before dining with Admiral Spoffkins, so as to have the satisfaction of checking off the sources of his separate dicta as he pronounces them. It would really be interesting, if it were a little more rare, to see a man ready to "kill, maim, and slay," in the evening, for opinions only imbibed that morning.

Sometimes his oracles have a spasmodic attack of science, then the Admiral waxes grand.

"We have discovered iron, sir, iron, in the red rays of the sun; tin in the white; and, let me see, wasn't it brass in the yellow rays? Fetch me the *Philosophical Transactions*, Holly."

"Yes, the Philanthropical Actions, my lambkin," adds Lady Maida.

"Where is it, Polly?" growled the lambkin.

"Why, the only one is for 1857, you stupid," said Polly.

The sisters are alarmingly candid to each other, but nothing ever comes of it; one of their peculiarities as sisters is, that they do not quarrel. I don't mean in company, of course; but, under all circumstances, a certain boyish good humour never deserts them. Polly came to my rescue now, with—

"Are you going to the Borens' talk on Wednesday, my Foozy?"

"Conversanzinioni, dearest," corrected Lady Maida.

"Well, that means talk, don't it?" said Polly, undaunted.

"She is such a purist, Mariana, dear child. Of course we are all going."

"I'm not," said Polly; "one gets nothing to eat at these things, and never knows how to dress oneself. The last was horrid."

"Mariana, I insist upon your dropping that style of comment, people will think that you get no attention."

"I got some," said Polly: "a near-sighted man came and sniffed at me, and said I should be very good-looking, when I grew up and altered."

"I hope you made your gratitude intelligible," said Holly, with a brotherly flash of her queer little eyes.

"I think I did," Polly answered, quietly.

Lady Maida looked alarmed, and broke in with, "I am so sorry the Lieutenant hates dancing."

It is a habit of hers to address one in the third person: she calls it gliding into the tenderly complimentary. I don't.

"He doesn't hate it," said Holly; "he says that if one can amuse a young woman by shaking the breath out of her, it is as easy a way as any he knows of doing it."

I could not deny the substantial correctness of Holly's report.

Her mother replied, "So glad; let me find you some nice partners."

"No," Polly interposed, "leave him to me. Look, there is my cousin Leonora, she does want a polka so."

I looked: the lady in question was certainly not the figure one would have chosen for a round dance, but her enjoyment of it would no doubt be proportionately keen.

"Do," pleaded Polly, "she gets so few partners."

There is a pathos in this phrase that is irresistible.

I did ask Miss Leonora; she accepted with a dignified air, as though I had taken a liberty, but she would forgive me. This I thought ungrateful of her, and it soon appeared that we had further incompatibility of temper. My notion of a polka is a waltz, with the time sharply accentuated; Miss Leonora's notion of a polka is a succession of jumps, with no time at all. It is really wonderful how a woman can spend three months of every year in dancing, and yet never learn anything about it. She was positively hugging me, too, as though to make up for the frigidity of her countenance.

Lady Maida came gliding by—"I need not ask the Lieutenant how he is enjoying himself."

Well, no, I thought, she needn't. If she was at all acquainted with the expression of prisoners on the rack, she could, no doubt, as she said, "see it in my face."

Favoured by the confusion of some fresh arrivals, I escaped, and took refuge with Polly, who, for a wonder, seemed inclined to hide behind my chair. She said presently, "Did you see that queer-coloured boy come in?"

The youth in question was unmistakable: red eyelids, pimples for beard, and a pink rash for whisker. I could but answer "Yes."

"Solomon his name is," pursued Polly. "Looks like it, doesn't he? They ought to be Jews; only some ancestor took a liking for pork, or something. I'm to marry him by-and-by."

"Polly!" I said, rebukingly.

"True, though," she replied, still speaking behind me. "Money, you know: the grandfather made it, smuggling salt over in herring-barrels. Must have tasted nice, I should think; some of it seems to have got into the family skin."

"What nonsense, Polly!"

"Tisn't, though; it was before the duty was taken off. He'll tell you the story, if you like; they're proud of it: it's their Cressy and Poitiers, you know. Holly was to have had him, but she struck out at once; wouldn't, anyhow. There is one comfort, I haven't got to be civil yet; he doesn't know the fate in store for him. His father said it wouldn't do; but Munny told him it would be no use to try and work her girls in the dark. She didn't put it like that, of course; talked about keen sensibilities, &c."

There was no feeling of any sort in Polly's voice; but turning round, I saw a grey, tired look settling down upon her little face.

"Something to live for, isn't it?" she said, as she moved away.

Oh, Polly! Polly! if I could but lay you beside my sister, who died long years ago.

So the only effect of that social evening was that I came home wishing the one person who had interested me, my host's little daughter, dead.

II.

I tried a man's party next—a dinner of the Cwm Flynny Lead-mining Company.

There was the usual dinner, and the equally usual noble chairman. I looked at him; he was quite sober, not idiotic, with no patent symptoms of softening of the brain. This was the speech he made. I took it down as being, in all senses, an epitome of the dinner:—

"Friends and Gentlemen,—I rise to say—in fact, I am bound to say—in fact, I am proud to say ['In fact, he has nothing to say,' muttered a dissident next me], to say, gentlemen and friends [great applause, *i.e.*, rapping of tables to cover the cracking of nuts], to say that we meet in the interests of the most stupendous work of this most stupendous age. ['Come, now, no shop,' interposed another dissident, loud enough to be heard across the table. It is to be hoped that the chairman was deaf; he went on, his voice growing hollow as he approached the depth of his subject.] It is becoming the fashion, in some quarters, to decry material prosperity; I say show me immaterial prosperity, and you show me what is—is— [here profuse perspiration, under the consciousness of spoiling a good point] —is—is—of no consequence. [Dissident whispers 'Mr. Toots.'] Why, gentlemen, the other day I was in Westminster Abbey. I was, indeed. [Feebly looking round, as much as to say, 'Why *don't* you clap?'] Hurried scramble of applause; speaker smiles approvingly, 'Ah, that's something like.' In Westminster Abbey, and I saw there a memorial window to—to, I forget his name at this moment, but I honour him as the greatest man who ever lived, and I rejoiced, yes, brethren, I mean gentlemen, I rejoiced to see that on this window they had put, not forgotten saints and angels, not—not anything of that sort; but, what would you think, my fellow-sharers in this glorious age? what could it be but— [an effective pause, rather spoilt for me by my neighbour's whisper of 'Putty'] —but a railway-train; the—the most wonderful—hum!—way of getting about ever invented; the—the greatest work of this, the greatest age that ever lived—fitly adorning the national cathedral. Not only so, but its companion glory

shone in many colours beside it—the Menai tubular bridge; the—the ugliest—hem!—magnified drain-pipe—ha!—ever thrown across the—the loveliest strait in Europe.”

I am bound to confess that if there is any inconsistency in the latter part of the speech, it is my fault; the speaker was floundering so helplessly, that happening to sit next to him, I could but prompt him, and it is possible that our sentiments may not have harmonized exactly.

There was rather a puzzled look went round the table as he sat down; but applause, like charity, covers a multitude of sins.

When all was over—one instinctively falls into funereal phraseology after this kind of thing—I said to my dissident neighbour,

“Have you got any shares in this?”

“Not I; have you?”

“Not I; has he?” I pointed to the chairman.

“Not he, nor they,” with a comprehensive sweep round the room.

So that we had actually assembled to talk humbug for the pure pleasure of it. No wonder this is a “stupendious” age, and the Britons a “stupendious” people.

III.

Dr. Boren, A.B.C.D.E.F.G. (I know he has seven letters after his name; I am not quite sure that these are the right ones), is in the habit of giving the entertainments which Lady Maida calls conversanzinioni. I say *he* gives them, advisedly, because, in these cases, the usual rule is reversed; it is the lady of the house who sits languidly looking on at her guests, as though they were a company of tame beasts that might be trusted to amuse themselves, while the master is positively steaming from his exertions. Dr. Boren's is a good house to go to, if there is some one you want to meet who is sure to be nowhere else. He felicitates himself on the catholicity of his platform. I have an aversion to platforms myself, and a decided distaste for social catholicity. One can accommodate one's sentiments to any one set of views for an evening; but to have half a dozen sets revolving round my ears is too much for me. No amount of tacking will enable a man to sail two ways at once. People are so pronounced always when they are conscious of not being all of the same way of thinking, besides being, of course, dreadfully well-informed on their pet subjects, that there is no getting off with a civil platitude or two, such as would serve on a real platform. It is, in fact, an indigestible affair altogether, like nothing but a dish of salad without oil.

At Wednesday's conversazione, I had scarcely entered, when a lady with a profusion of grey curls seized on me, saying,

“Would you open places of amusement on Sundays?”

“No,” I replied, at a venture.

“Dear me! I am disappointed; you a young man, too!”

She really seemed to be a nice woman. I intimated my willingness to gratify her, by standing first on one foot and then on the other. She did not seem to perceive this, but added, “I am so sorry for you,” with an air of such genuine pity, that I would have given something to see the back of my

head; her look was so exactly as though she saw a pair of cherubic wings sprouting out therefrom, and I don't want to be a cherub—just yet.

"Then you would not open the museums?" she said, reproachfully.

"I am afraid they wouldn't let me," I answered, feebly. Merton says I always lose my head in a long run across country.

"Ah! then we differ only in detail. It is earnestness of negation that is wanted in this, our time; will you try and cultivate it?"

I told her "Yes; if she would send me a root or two," and so managed to escape.

In escaping, I stumbled over a case of stuck beetles which a youth and maiden had got between them. He was expatiating on the beauty of nature; she didn't seem to see it. And, certainly, there was one monster, with a spotted body and red legs, who got into my dreams that night as the spirit of ugliness.

There is no flirt like a serious girl. This one turned at once to me with a request that I would join her in some mission to "poor people,"—a phrase which English people seem to use as the Americans do "nigger," to denote a distinct race.

"I cannot conceive what those miserable wretches would be without us," said Miss Beetles, oratorically.

"Well, I don't know," I said; "the happiest-looking human being I have seen for a long time was a small bundle of rags, seated in an old dish-cover, gnawing a bit of orange peel."

She suggested that the young urchin might have had some hidden misery.

I could only say that if so it was remarkably well hidden.

Then she said that he ought not to have been happy under such conditions; would not, if he had been well trained.

I granted that, of course; always do grant everything to everybody, especially to good people. They have, naturally, a wonderful knack of hitting one in the face; but, since muscularity came up, the inborn pugnacity of reformers has been sharpened into a science.

"Why will you say what you know you do not mean?" said Miss Beetles, with an air of solicitude calculated to drive youth No. 1 to distraction.

"Because, if ever I say what I do mean, somebody doesn't like it," I answered, correspondingly; but the naturalist looked so desperate, was contemplating a pin with such evidently suicidal intentions, that (especially as I was being bored to death) I magnanimously retreated, and left him master of the field and the beetles.

I had gone to Dr. Boren's specially to meet a certain young critic; of course we did not come together till near the end of the evening, and then didn't like one another.

I should think writing must be a nice employment from what he told me. I was asking him if he was not haunted by the ghosts of slaughtered genius.

"Oh, no," he said, jauntily, "that's the old tomahawk style; they are dying out, like the rest of the cannibals, from mutual annihilation. We have got a better plan."

"What is that?"

"Hail every new writer with acclamation, a sort of 'View Halloo,' you know; then set the dogs on him. As to genius, I believe in that as much as I do in ghosts; they were both lights of the dark ages, extinguished long ago."

I did not consider this a pleasant view of things, but he seemed to enjoy it; said too, that, socially, it rather gave zest to one's intercourse with a man to know that you would probably dine off him some day.

I was not sorry to be called away to examine a collection of criminal heads, which, by way of cheerful entertainment, our host had got together.

As something to say, I remarked upon the wonderful sleekness of murderers' hair; then, too late, discovered that my companion had a similar *chevelure*. Being embarrassed, I, of course, turned fluent, and began,

"Don't you think it was a good thing for Israel that another king arose, who knew not Joseph?"

"E-h-h?" said my Flat-head.

"Plethora induces bile, you know; the Goshenites would have been persecuting the Egyptians, if they had had it their own way much longer."

"Ah, that is Darwin's theory."

It was my turn to say "Eh?" this time.

"Yes, he and Colenso, you know, take the same ground. I should be grieved, indeed, to think that any friend of our esteemed host held those doctrines."

I have noticed that when a man says he should be grieved to think a thing, he is always in a great hurry to grieve himself; so this, mine expounder, proceeded at once to convince himself, though not me, that I knew all about the opinions of these two gentlemen, and was promulgating them under the direction of the Jesuits.

It felt rather like being beaten about the head, but I supposed it was all right, and, at any rate, Boren House was done for the next six months.

Near the door I stumbled over a fat man, yawning and stretching himself with such primæval frankness, that I stopped to admire.

"Like this sort of thing?" he said, at once.

"No," I answered.

"Ah, too frivolous for me."

I thought we might have been a little more frivolous without hurting ourselves, but reserved my views. Dorman continued—

"Fact is, all these people live for amusement, some one way, some another; you should come among those of us who have to do with the real business of life."

"What is that?" I asked.

"Why, making money, to be sure; commerce, sir, commerce is the true work of England," &c., &c. Given, a commercial man talking about commerce, and you can fill in the details. He ended, as from some latent benevolence they always do end, with "Come and dine with us to-morrow; do, now."

I demurred; one gets on at such a dreadful rate if one once begins to know anybody. But he did look so delightfully sleepy, that I thought I must; so accepted.

"That's right; no fuss, you know, no fuss."

He insisted so strenuously upon this, that I began to feel rather aggrieved. Of course, if when I got there they declined to make a fuss with me, I should no doubt make an effort to bear it; but to know beforehand that they had resolved upon this course of procedure was dispiriting.

IV.

There was a Mrs. Dorman; but she left us after dinner, and we saw her no more. There were some half-dozen sons, with enormously long legs, which they stuck out for one another to tumble over; this seemed to be the only enjoyment the family had in common, except sleep, their relish for which was really infectious. I hold in general that when a man is so exceedingly friendly as to go to sleep in your presence, it is time to leave him, with a "Requiescat in pace." Here my grievance was that they would not all slumber at once.

Like the rooks, they seemed to appoint one as watchman—he being distinguished by a ghastly sprightliness; his very life abnormal, uncomfortable, like that of a dead frog galvanized by scientific resurrection men. There was something dreadful, too, about his agreeability. I found myself saying outrageous things in the hope of getting what boys call a rise out of him—vain hope! We agreed that Cain was the great benefactor of the human race, because he invented mothers; that America was only discovered last year, and its previous history was all a popular myth; and that the world would come to an end precisely at 18h. 25m., astronomical time, on February 30th, 1867.

At length I rose to go. Mr. Dorman awoke suddenly. "Oh, you must not think of breaking up our delightful evening; such a pity you don't like cards; try a game of draughts—most intellectual. James, the board."

I was just equal to pushing the pieces about for a few minutes; then, in desperation, muttered something about an engagement, and made a final move.

The whole family started up to insist on the pleasure of seeing me to the door, where mine host stood drowsily shaking my arm up and down, evidently under the impression that he was ringing for his shaving-water.

"Now that you have begun," he said, yawning between each word, "you must come soon again (yawn)—it is so—(yawn) in this friendly way (yawn). There is nothing I like so well as a quiet, social evening (yawn). You will find us always the same."

Somebody would certainly find him in a state of tetanus if he gaped there much longer. I decamped, fell fast asleep in going home, and only awoke at my own door, murmuring, "Always the same—social evening."

THE DEFENCE OF THE "ALEXANDER,"
OFF ST. VINCENT IN 1794.

COME listen to my story,
Ye English spirits true,
A tale of seaman's glory
Which I shall tell to you,—
A tale of battle and of death,
A tale will make you hold your breath,
And tread with step more proud beneath
Old England's banner blue.

'Tis mist beneath the heaven,
'Tis mist upon the deep,
As convoy vessels seven
Across the still waves sweep;
But not unwatched they wander,
Their war-ship guards them all,
Her name "THE ALEXANDER,"
With Bligh her admiral.

With ports of grim defiance
We saw her dark hull tower,
A fortress of reliance
Against the Frenchman's power:
When lo! from out the misty veil
Five men-of-war with swelling sail
In battle-trim advance to hail
This one brave seventy-four.

The drums beat up to quarters,
The decks for action clear,
As o'er the silent waters,
Yet nearer and more near,
With face to face in gaze askance,
With hate of England and of France
Those battle-dams of death advance
Pregnant with woe and fear.

Then out spake our commander:
"Shake out your reefs and run:
I'll fight 'The Alexander'
Till hoarse is every gun:
Up England's flag! by which men know
The blood-red cross above,—below
The firmest friend, the fiercest foe
Of all beneath the sun."

Away the convoy started
Some friendly port to win,
But ere from sight they parted
They heard the game begin :
They saw the flash, they heard the sound,
As if Hell's gates were all unbound,
Then closed the veil of smoke around
The combatants within.

From every port-hole thundered
The volley-note of war,
The sea stood still and wondered,
The waves forgot to roar,
As gun to gun and port to port
Within that pall of smoke they fought,
Till Death, aghast, cried—"Such grim sport
I ne'er beheld before."

Crashed mast, and spar, and rafter,
In fury round their head,
The living yelled their laughter,
And silent smiled the dead ;
As fiercely boomed each gun and fast,
And swept their decks the battle-blast,
Till over each tall yard and mast
Up rose the misty moon.

She shone upon the water,
On far St. Vincent hill,
On scenes of wreck and slaughter,
Those waves so calm and still ;
But (sight of all most cheering
Which fell beneath her ray !)
The sea was clear, no sail was near,
The convoy far away.

Then looked our captain round him,
That gallant Admiral Bligh,
The dead in heaps surround him,
In wreck his bulwarks lie :
His sails hang down in tatters,
With blood his scuppers run,
Each shot the wounded shatters,
And he stands nigh alone.

He waved his sailor's bonnet,
He smiled a smile of glee,—
"We've played our game and won it,
A tattered flag strike we :

For full three hours we've held our deck,
We've fought five liners neck and neck,
The boards we stand on are a wreck,
Upon the rising sea.

"Come, Frenchmen, take our banner,
And darn it for your needs,
And hang it in due manner,
High in the *Invalides*:
That flag, when you have taught it
To wave your trophies o'er,
Shall show how dear you bought it
In seventeen-ninety-four.

GERARD MOULTRIE.

SHOEMAKERS' VILLAGE.

BY HENRY HOLBEACH.

XVI.

MR. FOAT went out at eventide to meditate, like Isaac; and something—nothing particular, but something like what you may suppose takes a dog in the street round one corner rather than another took him towards the village pond. It did not occur to him that there was anything worth studying in the crowd he saw there, and he was not a man to be fascinated, as you and I might be, by the rapid, reckless, mazy motion of the lads and lasses—he was merely mooning, having shut up his shop at eight o'clock. But, without any study whatever, he discerned three figures upon the ice—that of Mr. Woods, who had skates, those of Cherry and his daughter Fanny, who were sliding. Not unnaturally the good man (I do not say he was a bad man, he was simply an unchangeable cad) stayed a few minutes and watched the spectacle somewhat more closely than he had at first intended to do. Evidently Mr. Woods had not seen Miss White yet; but in a very few minutes the young man recognized the girl, with her little charge, and they made friends upon the ice. Their blood was up; Cherry laughed; Fanny laughed; the ice rang again; but the snow had long been gathering in the air, and now the moon was labouring and plunging among the grey clouds, so that it was not quite so easy as it might have been to see exactly all that passed between the flying figures upon the pond. But one thing Mr. Foat did see—Woods and Cherry were hand-in-hand; and as the time drew near at which the village public would naturally think of closing the sport for the night, this particular pair—there were many young pairs present—drew closer together. At last, and most awkwardly so far as the gratification of Mr. Foat's curiosity was concerned, the young couple he was watching seemed to him to sway close together, head to head, just at the darkest end of the line of march, under the hayricks.

Ask me no questions. I know nothing about it. I do know that just at that time Cherry's mind was somewhat occupied with a figure who for a while threatened to make her inexperienced little bosom fancy the Prince had come at last. Him, too, I can only hint at. He was a lecturer—a handsome young fellow who had taken Cherry's eye as he marched up to the desk at the schoolroom, under double escort, like a deserter, the clergyman in front, the rich brewer behind, and Miss Russett's show-girls awaiting his arrival in the front seats. I cannot believe that a girl of seventeen, bare, would be false to so impressive a figure as he cut. But then, on the other hand, we all know what happy young blood is, and I do not believe Mr. Foat would be guilty of an untruth.

The next morning Mr. Woods walked very buoyantly to town. On his way he met Mr. Shears.

"I don't know," said Shears, "whether you've read 'ist'ry?"—looking severely at Woods, as much as to say, If you have *not* read history, don't pretend you have; for I shall find you out! Shears had a vague idea that Woods, as a religious man, fond of poetry too, and generally of being up in the clouds, would scarcely occupy himself with anything so solid as history. However, Woods gave a nod of assent; but he seemed cheerily impatient.

"Because," continued Shears, "if you've read in 'ist'ry, you must have noticed that it's always the greatest 'appiness of the greatest number which——"

"What is the greatest happiness?" said Woods, laughing loud.

"You see, Mr. Woods, if you reason it out, and take the 'appiness of the greatest number——"

"The greatest number of *what*?" interrupted Woods, as gay as a lark. "I'm in a hurry—good-bye, good-bye!"

With an elastic step, and something like a long, unbroken laugh on his face, the Teacher passed on. He might well ask this question! An element had slid into his thoughts which would terribly have puzzled the arithmetic of Shears. He had before him a bright, fresh, young, rosy face, on his cheek the warmth of a whisper, on his arm the remembrance of a rapid touch.

Suppose the imponderable ecstasy were taken out of the world, would any happiness be worth any human being's trouble? Did it not hold in its mysterious grasp the golden key, which, incommunicable though known, unlocked for any soul the question, what is joy? How much happiness of how many tons of solid Shearses would be required to weigh down in the balance one hour of—— Oh, nonsense, nonsense, my young friend! This inward laughter of yours will pass off before the day is over, in a gentle melancholy that will make you love even Mr. Shears! But do not pledge yourself to anything while under the influence of *that* feeling, for it may pass off and leave you and Shears just where you were before.

If Mr. Woods had really kissed Cherry in the moonlight, it must not only have been a very light, rapid kiss, like the touch of a butterfly's wing on a flower; but it was, I do not doubt, the first kiss he had ever taken in all his life from any cheek or lip whatever. To those who find *too* much fun (I allow of a joke) in the thought of such self-restraint as this implies, I will observe that Mr. Woods had one advantage at least over them in the capacity

of his nature—"L'amour peut habiter dans le cœur d'un ascète; jamais dans celui d'un libertin."

Later on, in the course of the day, Woods met Mr. Evans, jaunty and good-tempered as ever; so shallow that it seemed hardly fair to treat him as an accountable being. As usual, he smelt of tobacco; as usual, he exhibited an ostentatious shirt wristband; as usual, except on the rare occasion of his having just bought a new one, his hat was shabby-shiny on one side of it. If his nature had *not* been so shallow, one might have accused him of perfidy in the matter of Mrs. Padbury and Zoar; but, as it was, you could scarcely call him by any word so charged with moral meaning as hypocrite or schemer.

"Hah! Woods, my friend, my dear friend, I'm glad we meet thus!" Then, after a few civil words have been exchanged, he sighs, and looking down to the pavement, with both his hands in his pockets, he addresses Woods in a grave undertone:—

"I think I've mentioned before—in a cursory way, you know—that I want—I wish to join—the church, Woods, the church? When is there another—baptising?"

"Hadn't ye better ask Mr. Cartwright?" says Woods, drily, but good-humouredly. "How is Mrs. Padbury? The church is very strict." This was a stab of a sort not usual with Woods; but he had just begun to feel that he had a fresh interest in the welfare of all women, and had a vague idea of warning Jack Evans off the pursuit of that poor old lady. Only he was in too buoyant a mood this morning to be angry with any one. Cartwright proved equal to the occasion.

"Mrs. Padbury? Oh—yes—yes! I've not seen her since—well, let me see—for a good while! I say, you rascal, how is Miss White? The church is very strict!"

So saying, he made a thrust at the fifth rib of poor Woods, and saying, "Tah-tah!" walked off. Woods was thunderstruck; and, for a few stupid seconds of time, stood stock still, staring after the impudent fellow's shuffling back. Jack had by this time forgotten all about it. His hands were still in his pockets; his broad shoulders were swaying from side to side; his heart was light; he was humming—

"There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,"—
and he was just barely wondering whether it was time for a glass of pale ale yet.

As for Woods, his first thought was not precisely the one you might expect. "If that animal were to die to-night," thought Woods, "would it be worth while to raise it from the dead to criticise its moral career (career!) in the presence of the universe, and then torment it for ever?"

He started at the thought—it stung him into quicker movement along the street. The thought came—"Underneath that wrapping of fleshliness there is a soul which can be quickened." And then the doubt—"But *is* there, *can* there be?" And again—"If there is, it is another being, and there could be no link of conscious identity between that other being and this being."

Thus, under the new glamour sprang up, full-sized, the elf-children of doubt, to plague him. It must be so when the conscience is not clear. I have here no room to analyse; but, I may say, in one word, he had received a light which made his past experience look like a very poor puzzle that could never be fitted together again. Yet he knew the light was a true light, and he could no more turn from it by an effort of the will than he could turn from the daylight. It was around him, and inside of him; it possessed him. As for those who would like me to make a distinction in his feeling or its source, between the spiritual and the physical, I must disappoint them. I refuse to bring into the sphere of transcendent emotion a scientific distinction which, though it emerges in theology and metaphysics, has no place either in poetry or poetic life. We are supposed to be now in Paradise—with the young-eyed cherubim smiling in the boscage, and the tree of knowledge untouched in the midst.

There is something of the promise of life in every young face; but a man inevitably finds *infinite* promise in a female face which is lovable, whether he love it or not. It is the immortality of mother's hope visibly diffused through incalculable lines and ethereal lights of beauty.

XVII.

When Cherry, having seen Fanny inside her father's door, came home, she found her mother in one of her most acrid moods, and quite inaccessible to pleasant chat. Cherry sat down on the other side of the fire, and stitched away at a dress. Her mother snapped out a word or two about the cold weather, which Cherry answered very gently—so gently, that her mother looked up and softened a little in her manner.

"Cherry, when do they mean to take down the holly and the gimcracks at your place?"

"Oh soon, mother; that is, if it isn't done already. I almost thought it was."

"We shall have our hands full with that boy—of yours, some day."

"Oh don't say that, mother!"

"He's as stubborn as a mule. I suppose we did right in taking to him. It seemed a leading."

Cherry laid down her work, and merely out of young love for the boy, went upstairs to have a look at him. He was lying fast asleep, breathing the unutterable peace that children do breathe; and as she leaned over his little bed, which was by the side of her own, she blew him a kiss, and, by a natural action, lifted her hands over him, and spread them out in benediction, with a smile upon her face.

I have noticed that precise action in very poor, simple people. If Mr. Woods could have seen her now! After a few moments, she stooped softly down, to get her little box of secrets from under the bed—she wanted her diary. She lifted the lid, and started back, uttering a half-suppressed "Oh!" for there was a good-sized pocket-book, old and rough, tightly-claped, as she saw at a glance, lying underneath her fan. Now, she knew every article in the house, and the pocket-book was a total stranger. She snatched it up,

and hurried downstairs to her mother, as if she knew a ghost were behind her. With a face as pale as death she laid it on the table.

"Look what I have found in my box!"

"Cherry," said her mother, angrily, "I will have none of your nonsense to-night."

"Oh, it's no nonsense, mother," said Cherry, panting, "I did find it there just now, and how did it come there, and what is it?"

The two women stared at the old worn pocket-book; felt its weight, and it was rather heavy; shook it, and it jingled; threw it down; made exclamations; took it up and threw it down again.

"Cherry, I don't believe you're a liar; but you *must* know something about that pocket-book! Do tell your mother plainly!"

"I tell you, mother," says Cherry, stamping and half hysterical, "I know nothing about it. But I *will* know: so here goes, mother!"

She tore open the pocket-book, and turned out its contents. A sovereign, a half-sovereign, a few shillings and lesser coin; a wedding-ring, a marriage-certificate; a folded paper, marked "To be read after my death."

Mrs. White eagerly clutched at this paper; her curiosity was unbounded.

"Stop, mother!" says Cherry, "do you think we ought to open it? How do we know the person is dead?"

"Oh, nonsense, Cherry! how do we know *anything* about it? It's our only way of finding out. Let's open it at once!" said Mrs. White, endeavouring to get possession of the paper, upon which Cherry kept a tight hand.

"No, mother, no," said Cherry; "it's *my* paper; it was in *my* box; and I don't feel sure we ought to open it. I should like to ask somebody's opinion."

"I'll never agree to such a thing as having a policeman in my house," said Mrs. White, boiling over with anger.

"We don't want law, mother; we want wisdom. Let me go and ask Mrs. Branch."

"Why, that's a nice joke," said Mrs. White, restored to good temper by the sense of her superiority to Mrs. Branch; "go to Mrs. Branch for wisdom, hey? Do you call her a wise woman?"

"Yes, I do, mother," said Cherry, gently; but feeling excitedly at her curls, and putting her hair net on and off.

"What do you say to Mr. Woods, then?"

Cherry turned crimson. "You can do as you like, mother. I shall ask Miss Russett and Mrs. Branch." And she was firm. The paper remained unopened under her pillow all night. The next day she took counsel of Miss Russett—*her* advice was, "Take it to Mr. Bligh!" the incumbent. She asked Mrs. Branch—who told her to mind the shop while she went upstairs—to wash her face, to cool her, she said; and, indeed, she seemed much excited. But she was gone a good deal longer than was necessary for the mere purpose of having a dip in the wash-hand basin. After a few minutes spent upon her knees, she went to her son Tom's Bible, opened it, and cast her eye upon the page. Then she shut the Bible, and came down to Cherry with a smile upon her hot face, and eyes that gleamed moist and excited through her goggles. She took Cherry by both hands, and nodding

seriously, yet cheerfully at the girl, said, in a solemn whisper: "But it shall come to pass that at evening-time it shall be light." Then she smiled again, and bridled up a little.

"Well," said Cherry, "does that mean that I'm to open the paper?"

"Yes, my dear, *yes!* And I only wish I was going to be present!"

XVIII.

It has been said that there never was a diarist who, in recording what he had seen, did not show that he had omitted to notice some essential incident. Cherry seems to have been no exception to this rule; but I have only room to say that the paper was as follows:—

"I am a wretched mother whose only child has been lost, and I am also a deserted wife; but that is little, for what I want is my child. I have been seeking him for a long time, and if I die, or if I go mad, and if anything should have happened to Mr. Wyndham, I hope some kind Christian will print this paper, with my name in full, and the description of the clothes. I think, myself, I am more likely to go mad than to die, because being so often mesmerised seems to affect my head so; and yet I feel strong in body, and keep my appetite and my sleep. But, whether I die or go mad, I pray on my bended knees that some kind pitiful people or other may have compassion on my misery and publish this in the newspapers.

"I was the daughter of very poor parents, one of whom did something which was against the law. I am ashamed and very grieved in my heart to say this, but I must tell everything; and I fear it does not matter, and never will matter. In her declining years, my mother, being left alone in the world, became a dresser at the * * * theatre, in * * * and, as a little girl of twelve or thirteen, I used to accompany her to the dressing-rooms of the actresses, and help her. When she was ill I sometimes took her place, and by degrees I was drawn in by the influence of circumstances, and became one of the *corps-de-ballet*. There was a tragedian, or leading man, there, of the name of Charles Boldero, though the name he went by on the stage was Douglas. He was said to be of genteel connections, and he was the proudest man I ever saw in my life; his pride was a kind of madness, and I sometimes think he could hardly have been always in his senses; because his family was nothing *great* after all, and yet he was as proud as if he had sprung from royalty itself. Mr. Boldero was pleased with my manner and delivery one night when I had to go on for a comrade and speak some words. Every young lady in the ballet is pleased when she has some words to speak, and I was much flattered by the notice of the leading tragedian, who scarcely ever took notice of anybody, and deemed the earth hardly good enough for him to walk upon. As nobody will see this till I am dead or mad, there is no harm in my saying that I was pretty—at least I hope there is not; but my head is never clear now, and I am afraid there are a good many mistakes in this paper, which, if it should ever be printed, the public will kindly overlook, I trust, because I never had any but a plain education, except what I gathered upon the stage, and from Mr. Boldero. With my mother's full consent and approbation, I used to go to Mr. Boldero's house, and take lessons in elocution, to prepare me for the profession.

He was so high and so distant always, and so much as if he thought he was a real king or baron, that nobody would ever have dreamt for half a moment of his looking on a poor girl like me; and, besides, he knew what I have mentioned respecting one of my parents. I used to think, so far as coming near me went, he considered me an infected person. I will not relate when or how a change set in, though I cannot say that I forget, bad as my head is now. But he paid his addresses to me, and made me promises, and one day my mother went to try to see him. This was almost impossible—he was always denied to her; the servant at his lodgings said he was out. At last, in a great rage, my mother forced her way into the green-room one day, and asked him point-blank, in the presence of the manager and all the company, whether he would keep his promise and marry me. I do not approve of this, and am sorry it was done, but I did not know it till afterwards. Mother said he turned like a stone, and said he would keep his promise, but in such a way that she felt as if he was a king, and she was a slave being spat upon. Filled with bitterness, mother came to me, and informed me in a quiet way that Mr. Boldero would keep his promise, and then it was all arranged by mother, and I was married. When the ceremony was over, he turned to my mother, as stately as death, and said, 'Madam I have kept my promise.'

"Directly afterwards I knew what that meant, for he disappeared, without speaking or writing me a word of good-bye, although he left me a little money, which he said was every penny he had, and I quite believe it. He kept on sending me small sums or money for a time, but never wrote a word of kindness, or even so much as signed his name inside a letter. I would not allow my mother to seek him out, and I was not able to do it myself, for I was not well; and in time my child was born. He was a nice little boy; I do not say a fine baby, but one that everybody must love. I suckled him for a month or more, as long as my money lasted, and as long as my husband kept on sending me small sums. But that shortly ceased altogether, and I never had any news of him. He may be dead for what I know. Then mother died, and there were the expenses of her funeral, and I was nearly broken-hearted at having to put my little boy out to nurse.

"I could not afford a wet nurse, and I should not have liked my child to have any breast but mine, so I put him out to dry nurse, and used to go and suckle him myself every morning and every night. This went on for a good time, till he was growing quite a beautiful little baby. We were alone in the world together, and his little love was more than heaven to me—if there is a heaven, or anything that is *really* good. I hope kind Christians will have compassion. Wicked thoughts come to me of their own accord. When I can cry, I feel as if there was something good, but I cannot often shed tears, and I mostly feel as if I should like to be a witch, and *speak* to the devil, and learn things from him. I hope kind Christians will have compassion. I could not write this out twice, and I must speak the truth.

"I did not know, on account of her artful concealment, that the nurse where I put out my little child was a drunkard. One night, when I went to her lodgings to give my baby the breast, she was out. I waited a long

while, and she did not come back; and she never did come back all night, or ever at all a living woman. She fell down drunk in the open road a few doors off from her lodgings, and was run over and killed. I saw her corpse; but my beautiful little boy was not run over and killed. It seems a wicked wish, but if I wished he had been, I think I should not be able to feel wicked—my head is confused, and this is badly written down. At least, he was not run over along with that woman; who knows whether he was not killed that night? but I do not believe he was. As soon as I knew he was lost, I fainted away—you may call it fainting; but something seemed to crack at my left side, and my head sang as if I was turning deaf. I went off into something, one said fever, and one said mania, when I came to; but that was not for a long time, I do not know that I am sure how long it was. But I know I had been ill, and lying idle when I ought to have been seeking for my baby. They had had bills put up at the police stations, and the workhouses, and everywhere, and all inquiries made; but they could not do it like a mother. My head had been cropped, and my milk was gone, I hardly felt the same woman. Oh, am I the same woman? I sometimes think it is all a dream; I think I am one woman, and the mother that lost her child was somebody else. I did not know what to do—what to do; and all my madness was gone, and I was very cold and calm, as if I had been made numb in some sort of way. I had a burning fire under my skin that kept on telling me to go and look for baby all over the world, but yet it did not seem to warm me and make me quick and brisk. Very often I felt wicked, and as if I never cared enough *now* for my pretty one. And yet, of course, the public will understand that I did care all the while, and I used to cry at sudden times like, till my eyes went rather dim; but I cannot explain my feelings, only I dare say some kind Christian mother will make out what I mean, a little, enough to feel for me. I have asked hundreds and thousands if they knew of a child having been lost and taken care of. I bought a map of London, and marked it out into squares, and spent all the time I was away from the theatre at night and in rehearsals in hunting about, and asking questions. May you never lose a child, is my prayer; you had better see him die in his little bed before your eyes than be uncertain as I am to my dying day.

"One night, when I was performing in a farce, and Mr. Wyndham, the walking gentleman of our company, was playing to me, he had to make mock passes at me like a mesmerist, as I was seated in my chair. They were laughing loudly in front, for it was only meant in nonsense; but, after a very few movements of Mr. Wyndham's hand, I felt a strange, prickly, yet drowsy sensation coming over me, which made me afraid I should forget my cue. With great effort I got out the words, 'What are you doing that for, Mr. Poppins?' but so faintly, that they laughed louder than ever in front, at my droll, languid manner, which they thought was intended; but immediately all power of speech and movement deserted me, as Mr. Wyndham proceeded with the passes. I felt my arms sink down, and my eyelids shut up, and a general drowse and quietness come over me, and I had only what you may call a glimmer of what was going on outside my own mind. I heard Mr. Wyndham speak some words very loudly, but I did not distinctly remember

them as my cue, and I made no answer. I remained half-conscious and only half-conscious. It seemed as if I had become suddenly deaf and blind to everything but him, and that I was alone with him on a cloud up in the air, or somewhere under the earth. I only know what he did because I was told afterwards. He had sense enough to see what had happened, for he immediately reversed the passes, and, having been only half entranced, I was quickly roused from the mesmeric sleep. They cheered me loudly in front, as I was led off by Mr. Wyndham. He told me in a rapid whisper that I had been in the trance—that I was a medium. The company gathered round me, joking, and the farce went on; but a thought rushed into my head which nigh drove me mad on the spot; with hope, I mean. Mesmerised people could sometimes see things at a distance, and tell secrets, so I had heard, and if I could only get into the full trance, I might perhaps become clairvoyante, and find out where my little boy was. The kindest Christian that may read this will never conceive what I felt when those thoughts came to me. I went on again at the end of the farce, and played in a wild dream of hope; but as soon as ever the drop was down, I took Mr. Wyndham aside, and made a proposal to him. He was not very clever in his profession, though a perfect gentleman, and particularly fond of his book. The proposal I made was that we should both of us leave the stage, and that he should mesmerise me in public till I came to be clairvoyante. He agreed to this, for his salary as a walking gentleman was small, and mine as a dancer, to go on now and then, and speak some words as a walking lady, was a mere nothing; but he was much respected by the company, and the parting was a most sad one, especially as they knew of my trouble, and found out what I was thinking of. They all looked at me very strangely when I bade them good-bye, and Mrs. —, the manager's wife, kissed me, and cried, and said God bless you, and was very cheerful for all her crying, and told me to be sure and let them know when I had found my little boy.

"Mr. Wyndham soon found out some things to lecture about, and we called it Electro-Biology, and my name was put in the bills at once as Clairvoyante Celestine. There were several things he could do with me at once: he could catalepsy my arm, I think that is right, but my head is very bad, and make me do things with my eyes shut as well as when I was awake. So we got on very well, and it drew wherever we went, Woolwich and Kensington, and Islington, and Stratford, and Hatcham, and Tooting, and all round London, at first; and then in the country; but it was near London I liked to be best, and near where the nurse of my child had been living, which I shall put at the end of this letter, with an account of the clothes he had on at the time. I hope and trust you will have compassion on a poor, heart-broken mother, whoever reads this. It is only one little child to you, and you think it is not much, I daresay, any more than an apple in an orchard; but you must not think of it in that way, you must think of it as if it was *your own child*, and then you will feel for me.

"But the worst is to come, though you may well wonder what that can be, when I had lost my baby in that way. Though I was called Clairvoyante Celestine in the bills, there was no imposition, for we began like that, feeling

sure I should go on to be clairvoyante as other subjects do; but I never did. I never got farther into the mesmeric trance than half or two-thirds, and never could see anything in my sleep that I could not see at other times. Now and then I used to lose myself in the trance, especially as I got weaker; then when I came to, I was mad to know if I had said anything of what I had seen. But no, no, no; it never came. At last my liver became affected, and I had jaundice twice. I understand it is almost sure to make you ill, if you do not go off into the trance complete. Then I had to paint. We could not give it up, because I had encouraged Mr. Wyndham to leave his profession for my sake; and he was always the perfect gentleman, only when we had been round the towns near London a few times he tried to persuade me my husband must be dead, and made me an offer of marriage; but I told him it would seem like dancing on my baby's grave till I had found him, if ever I did find him (I am afraid this is very badly written), and he never spoke of it again. I shall ever be grateful to Professor Wyndham. He was like a brother to me in my two illnesses. I say I am grateful, but I do not feel as if I had any heart left to be grateful with; only I know that is wicked.

"I have always considered it very strange that I never became clairvoyante. Perhaps some people will say it would be a miracle to find a child like that; but if ever the Almighty works miracles, I should have thought mine was the right case for a miracle. Other people have been clairvoyantes, when it was of no use, and why should I not be clairvoyante, when I had lost a child? These things are great mysteries; and I generally think the Almighty is a very dreadful mystery himself. The half and quarter trances, and the weariness have confused my head; but I feel as if I was groping for something in the dark, with nothing but dark, except cold, all over me and everywhere. If I found my baby, or if I knew he was dead, and safe in his little grave, I could believe there was an Almighty that was not a dreadful mystery, but I do not think I shall ever find him. If you were in my place, you would feel that you would rather see your darling's little body cut right in two by a shark, and hear his scream, and know he was dead and gone to heaven, than to be as I am. How do I know but what he is beaten, and starved, and cursed at, and taken about to beg? He may be crying in the next street for his mammy, and I do not know it. I may have passed him in the street this very day, and not known him. He might grow up in bad ways, and come to the gallows, and I should never know it. If I was to live so long, I might hear that he was hung, and think he was a wicked man, without knowing he was my own son. I hope all good Christians will think of this—but I cannot make it very plain—I only know that if I live long enough I shall be afraid to hate any living man that is not too old to be my son, for fear I should be hating him. But have I been saying some things twice over? I keep my wedding-ring and certificate in this parcel, along with a piece of the own of the child's frock that he ought to have been wearing when he was lost. I am quite sure he was not run over; for if he had, I should have heard of that. May you never lose a child."

